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New York

Co-Chairperson: Ms. Tarja Halonen ..... (President of the Republic of Finland)

Co-Chairperson: Mr. Sam Nujoma ..... (President of the Republic of Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Addresses on the occasion of the Summit (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will first hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic.

President Havel: What will this world, and the United Nations, look like a hundred years from now? There are countless possibilities — from the most horrific to the ideal. And it would be against our elementary political obligation if we did not seek to pursue the better rather than the worse choices.

What should the United Nations be in the event of a favourable development of the world, and how should it help to advance such development?

First of all, it should probably quickly change from a scene of clashes among particular interests of various States into a platform of joint, solidarity-based decision-making — by the whole of humankind — on how best to organize our stay on this planet. Even more definitely, it should transform itself from a large community of Governments, diplomats and officials into a joint institution for each inhabitant of this planet, all of whom should see it as their very own Organization, for which they spend money, not only in order that the Organization shall defend them as individuals, but also in order that, on the authority of the people, it shall look for ways towards the lasting well-being of humanity and towards a genuine quality of life.

Such a United Nations would probably have to rest on two pillars: one constituted by an assembly of equal executive representatives of individual countries, resembling the present plenary, and the other consisting of a group elected directly by the globe's population, in which the number of delegates representing individual nations would, thus, roughly correspond to the size of the nations. These two bodies would create and guarantee global legislation.

Answerable to them would be the Security Council — or its successor — which would serve as an executive organ handling, on a continuous basis, some of the crucial problems of the world. The composition of this organ would, of course, have to be different from that of the present Security Council. The qualifications and the personalities of the individual members would probably carry more weight than the circumstance as to which country they come from. Also, the right of veto should probably not be exercisable by any single member.

The future United Nations should have its own permanent military and police force. The superior executive organ should monitor the observance of laws or decisions of the Organization, and seek their enforcement in the areas of security, human rights, environment, alimentation, economic competition, health, finance, local development, etc.

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Whenever I encounter any problem of today's civilization, I inevitably always arrive at one principal theme: that of human responsibility. This does not mean merely the responsibility of a human being towards his or her own life or survival; towards his or her family; towards his or her company or any other community. It also means responsibility before the infinite and before eternity — in a word, responsibility for the world. Indeed, it seems to me that the most important thing that we should seek to advance in the era of globalization is a sense of global responsibility.

Somewhere in the primeval foundations of all the world's religions we find, basically, the same set of underlying moral imperatives. It is within this set of thoughts that we should look for an ethos for global renewal and for the source and energy of a truly responsible attitude towards our Earth and all its inhabitants, as well as towards future generations. Without an ethos emanating from a rediscovered sense of global responsibility, any reform of the United Nations would be unthinkable, and without meaning.

Let me conclude by expressing my great appreciation for the report prepared for this Summit by the Secretary-General. Behind his proposals, I see precisely the same ethos that I have just described.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of Eritrea.

President Afwerki: I should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for taking the necessary steps to convene this Millennium Summit. The advent of the new millennium comes at a crucial time. Globalization and rapid advances in information technology offer humankind vast, unprecedented opportunities to improve the quality of life. Yet these opportunities may also be fraught with undesirable consequences. They may exacerbate marginalization and induce a widening of the technological gap in our global village. Thus, there is a need to harness the forces of globalization by fostering a deep sense of communality, international cooperation and human solidarity.

For almost half of the past century, my people were forced to shoulder the burden of a long and costly war. It took the sacrifice of two generations to get rid of colonial occupation so that we could enjoy the benefits of independence and freedom. Yet now, only a short time after its hard-won independence, my country is forced once again to defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

I have no intention of dwelling on the conflict that has wreaked havoc on our region. Yet the conflict impacts on the core values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and re-affirmed in the Summit Declaration, regarding respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States; the sovereign equality of all Member States; non-interference in the internal affairs of any State; and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means.

It is gratifying to note that the conflict has been halted and that an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities has been signed in Algiers. In this respect, I wish to express my Government's gratitude to all of our partners, in particular to the Government of Algeria, the African Governments involved in the Organization of African Unity peace process, the United States Government and the European Union, which have done so much to promote peace. My Government is also gratified by the goodwill that has been demonstrated and wishes to thank all those who have already pledged to contribute troops or other appropriate support to the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

The most daunting task facing our societies is the elimination of poverty and the creation of an enabling environment for steady and sustainable development. Multi-faceted support from our development partners, and the appropriate institutional adjustments that are being contemplated to enhance the effectiveness of this support, will be vital in overcoming this challenge. But these injections, however robust, will not guarantee sustainable development unless they are accompanied by our own vigorous efforts.

In this respect, my Government believes that the primary focus should be on human resource development in the broadest sense of the term. This is not a simple matter of rapid skill development, but includes a host of social and political measures which impact on each other. We need to narrow the gap in our own societies between those living in urban and those living in rural areas so as not to create pockets of affluence and privilege in a sea of rural poverty.

We must evolve appropriate forms of decentralization and devolution to enhance grass-roots participation in decision-making and to maintain cultural diversity in a framework of national unity. We

need to introduce and develop, if necessary through short-term affirmative action, meaningful measures to empower women in order to ensure their all-round participation at all levels of our national development. We need to eliminate killer diseases, such as malaria and HIV, which affect vast segments of our deprived societies. We need to eliminate official corruption, foster a culture of accountability and cultivate the values and institutions that favour enduring democracy and constitutionality.

My Government has made remarkable strides towards achieving these goals and aspirations, although the current conflict has affected the pace of the progress under way. But even in the best of circumstances, we recognize that these aims cannot be achieved in the short haul. There is thus the need to see these interconnected goals as processes, rather than as quantifiable measures that can be achieved within very tight, specified, time-frames. Above all, we have to see these goals and aspirations as joint-venture engagements. The fact is that there is a communality of views and shared values with our development partners. To the extent that there are differences, they are matters of timing or of a methodological nature, which are not problematic in themselves.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Sir Orville Turnquest, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Sir Orville Turnquest (Bahamas): I am deeply honoured to address this Millennium Summit, the only one for 1,000 years, as we, the heads of State and heads of Government of our Member nations, come together to discuss and to share our vision of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

I wish, on behalf of the delegation of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, to extend warm congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons on their election. Over the past three days, they have displayed great ability in steering these important deliberations with prudence and with sensitivity.

More than half a century has passed since the United Nations was established following a devastating global conflict. In that period of 55 years, we have seen the United Nations confronted with many a regional war and skirmish and having to deal effectively with such social challenges as health, welfare, the law, education, labour and practically every other human condition affecting the welfare of the United Nations constituent States and territories. With each challenge, it has been important that, for the most part, the United Nations propositions and solutions were relevant to the times.

Current times and conditions demand that we at this Millennium Summit attempt to answer the burning question: What are the prospects for the United Nations in the twenty-first century? Because the world has, particularly in the final quarter of the twentieth century, advanced tremendously in the areas of science and technology, and we have allowed the human spirit of freedom to flourish, it is undeniable that the prospects are greater today to be better educated, to live healthier and longer lives and to achieve a greater degree of economic well-being.

Those are the prospects, but to what degree has the world truly been able to achieve improved standards of living? We are still for the most part trapped in a pernicious syndrome of the haves versus the have-nots, because those very factors which have contributed to improved standards for some have likewise contributed to the extreme impoverishment, dispossession and marginalization of millions of others around the world. Those same factors which have enhanced the existence of some have caused serious environmental degradation in the backyards of others and in some cases have actually threatened the peace and security of humanity to an unexpected degree, which is quite an ironic twist of fate when one considers the noble and lofty precepts which went into the establishment of the United Nations 55 years ago.

There is, however, hope because those lofty ideals and goals of the United Nations are yet intact and are supposedly held sacred by all of us. With the United Nations leading the way, we can yet address the myriad challenges to international society in the twenty-first century, in which we must somehow rescue from extreme poverty the nearly 50 per cent of the world's population who are obliged to survive on $2 per day and the 1.2 billion people compelled to survive on less than $1 per day.

The United Nations of the twenty-first century must lead the way in rescuing the world's 140 million workers — most of them in developing countries — who are unemployed or under-employed. The United Nations of the twenty-first century must, in a meaningful way, address those inequities in the global

economy in which the 1 billion people in the developed world earn 60 per cent of the world's income and in which the 3.5 billion people in the developing world earn less than 20 per cent.

The United Nations of the twenty-first century must find a means of diverting much of the $56 billion spent annually on health research to the 90 per cent of the world's population who so desperately need it, who are plagued with serious health problems such as diarrhoea, tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia and the deadly HIV/AIDS, but who sadly are availed of a mere 10 per cent of that $56 billion.

The United Nations of the twenty-first century must address the continuing litany of environmental degradation, human rights abuses, violence against women and children, drug-trafficking, the rampant spread of crime — particularly organized crime — and the illicit traffic in firearms, all which threaten to destabilize our societies and our world. Yes, the United Nations of the twenty-first century must address these security threats with the same vigour that this body has traditionally demonstrated with regard to threats to traditional peace and security.

At the end of the twentieth century, globalization became a ubiquitous catchword signifying a concept and a conduit for bringing prosperity to the world at large. Ideally, globalization heralded significant opportunities and benefits, but the truth is that the ideal has never really been manifested. Opportunities and benefits have not been evenly distributed. Indeed, globalization has come at a great cost to developing countries, and now there is need for serious debate on the issue.

In point of fact, the concept of globalization was recently brought sharply into focus when small States such as the Bahamas attempted to take advantage of the benefits of globalization by developing financial services sectors, only to encounter serious challenges from developed countries. The Bahamas continues to emphasize the necessity for greater and more inclusive discussion of all those issues whose outcomes have significant implications for the well-being of concerned developing countries, with the United Nations given a role in resolving these issues.

This Millennium Summit provides us with a unique and historic opportunity to bring a qualitatively new approach to proposals and initiatives, to bring together the world's disparate peoples — the haves and have-nots to whom I referred earlier — the developed and developing States — the world of the twentieth century and that of the twenty-first. The opportunity is there and it is imperative for the United Nations, with a democratic and transparent and accountable Security Council, to play the role delineated in the Charter, better to embrace this important opportunity.

The United Nations of the twenty-first century must commit to ensuring the promotion of a new world order in which the whole is truly more than the sum of its parts, where every part — every human being — has an opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Teburoro Tito, President and Prime Minister of Kiribati.

President Tito: I bring warm greetings from the people of Kiribati to our wonderful hosts, the President and the people of the United States, and to all leaders and peoples of the world present here today. On this occasion, I also want to add my congratulations to Tuvalu on being admitted as a Member of the United Nations.

This unprecedented Summit is a great opportunity for us to come together as members of the global family to celebrate the achievements of the last millennium and to chart a new course for the new century. To this end, I wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for providing us with very useful information and proposals, as outlined in his report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". Because of time constraints, the more extensive views we want to share are expressed in the text that has been distributed.

Twelve months ago, when Kiribati was first admitted to this global family, I expressed our faith in and support for the noble principles that this body stands for, as enshrined in its Charter. I also expressed our hopes and desire for a more democratic, a more united and a more proactive United Nations to help in the building of a better world, and also our readiness to contribute with whatever we have, little though it may be, towards the tasks of the United Nations.

Reflecting back, much was achieved in the last century, and there is much to be grateful for. The greatest achievement has been the success in freeing humanity from the painful threat and fear of another

world war, and the provision of a relatively peaceful world within which major scientific inventions and technological innovations needed for the improvement of human life have been made possible. Nevertheless, there is still much that must be done to improve this world and the lives of those who live in it today and for future generations. Hence, I would now like to focus on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century and the need for cooperation and mutual understanding between the United Nations and its Member States, and also between developed countries and developing countries.

I support the view already expressed by many speakers that the vision of a better world can be achieved through a shared commitment and responsibility between Member States and the United Nations, between developed and developing countries. The Member States need to do all they can within their mandates to make life better and alleviate the sufferings of their peoples. On the other hand, the United Nations must do everything it can to support the Member States, by tackling international dimensions beyond the reach of individual Members.

It is therefore very important that there be mutual support and encouragement between the United Nations Secretariat and the Governments of the Member States to ensure that both parties are strongly committed to playing their respective roles. It is equally important that developed countries and developing countries have mutual understanding and be able to work together in friendship.

I would respectfully like to propose that the aims, objectives, organizational structure, scope and emphasis of this Organization should be updated to reflect the situations and circumstances of these times, which are obviously very different from those of the 1940s, when the United Nations was first formed.

Thus, Kiribati fully supports the move to democratize and rationalize the organizational structure of the United Nations, in particular the expansion of the Security Council, the creation of the Pacific regional grouping and the inclusion of at least one representative from each regional grouping in the membership of the Security Council.

I also agree with the view that the United Nations could be a more effective organization if it tried to understand the problems that continue to plague many countries from the perspective of the countries concerned. We in Kiribati believe that the advocated economic and financial models intended to enhance gross domestic product growth and provide better living standards for all in most instances tend to advantage those more able to compete for limited space, markets and resources regardless of political systems, cultural values and the nature of the playing field. The outcomes normally favour those already advantaged, hence breeding ill feeling and leading to undesirable behaviour and conflict for those not part of the success.

Thus, we argue that current economic and financial theories originating in industrialized countries support the urbanized structures of those societies, their institutions and peoples, founded on individualism and the unlimited accumulation of wealth.

The people of Kiribati perceive communal or village ways of life, protection and sustenance of human life and the glorification of human values to be as important as becoming wealthy. We have a saying in Kiribati: "The rich and the cultured, or the cultured rich".

It has been my long-held observation that in our eager pursuit of economic prosperity, coupled with the rapid changes many of us are often pressured to adopt, we have seriously overlooked the significance of social and cultural values. Subsequently, there is continuous erosion of the family and community fabric essential for peace of mind and happiness. I believe in blending the models advocated by the main international organizations with our own specific circumstances, and we are doing just that in Kiribati. This of course requires mutual understanding between ourselves and those who believe in imposing their economic models.

In this respect, I am pleased to learn that the United Nations and other regional agencies are currently developing a more suitable model of development for communal societies, and I would request more support to be given to this important area, because I can assure the Assembly that Kiribati will be the first to accept that model.

Another area needing mutual understanding is human rights. We applaud the great contribution that the United Nations has made in this field. However, there are differences of opinion between those from the so-called developing countries and the developed nations. The former strongly argue that many of the

conventions forming the international human rights regime are biased in favour of the beliefs and the practices of the latter.

On the other hand, the latter criticize the former, saying they lack the commitment to effectively implement human rights policies and practices. A good example here is the fact that Kiribati does not believe entirely in all of the human rights for children that are set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Kiribati has expressed reservations on this subject, because we believe our concepts of human rights for the child are much, much better for our community, and we would like to convey that to the international community. We are known to have been like that for thousands of years. Our children look after their families and parents, and parents look after children very well, without any adverse effects. We would like to alert the international community to the fact that there are still civilizations as old as some of those in the West that believe strongly in the stability of their families and communities.

Let us also remember the extent of the damage done to our environment, mainly by technological and economic advances. We are thus called upon again to work together with mutual understanding. Globalization is advocated as the order of the day; however, it can have adverse effects that can cause irreparable damage if corrective action is not taken immediately. For a small island State like Kiribati — which is made up of narrow strips of coral atolls rising no more than 2 metres above sea level — global warming, climate change and rising sea levels seriously threaten the basis of our existence, and we sometimes feel that our days are numbered. I join other small island States in pleading the cause of endangered peoples, and I urge all concerned to save this planet from any further damage or harm, to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the resources and beauty of this planet.

These are some of the thoughts I wished to share from the bottom of my heart and from the people of Kiribati at this gathering, which aims to build a more caring, peaceful, prosperous and just world for all. I sincerely believe that together we can build a better world. May God bless the United Nations and the peoples of the world.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan, President of the Somali Democratic Republic.

President Hassan: It is with great pleasure that I am participating in this historic Millennium Summit, which has brought together the largest-ever number of heads of State or Government. The participants in this meeting are to make critical choices in the unfolding human drama.

On behalf of the Somali Republic, I would like to express well-deserved appreciation to the Secretary-General for spearheading effectively the holding of this meeting and for preparing his comprehensive report on the state of humanity and on the emerging challenges, which are truly global. Only through collective deliberations and decisions will we be able to cope with the complexities of the new century.

The role of the United Nations has been important over the past 55 years. Its role in this new era of sobering interdependence is bound to be central. Somalia pledges to associate itself with those who are committed to a renewed, energized United Nations which articulates and affirms a vision of global governance based on participation and accountability.

The United Nations itself has to be a symbol of good governance. The deliberations and decision-making process of the United Nations have to be made accessible to worldwide civil society, whose views, opinions and expertise are to be channelled through new pathways to be established and maintained. People-centred strategies are needed to solve human societies' profound, interrelated problems of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, environment and globalization. The democratization of the United Nations and the enhancing of its effectiveness are requisites for a renewed and energized United Nations.

It is gratifying for me to bring back Somalia to the United Nations. It has taken us 10 long years to bury the hatchet and to start healing our self-inflicted wounds. When my brother, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, submitted his Somali peace initiative during last year's session of the General Assembly, it was received with complete scepticism. Many other initiatives have foundered on the intransigence of warlords and their inability to rise above their gamesmanship and zero-sum orientation. Despite the misgivings of those more familiar with our case, President Ismail Omar Guelleh persevered with

his peace initiative. Segments of Somali civil society, including traditional elders, businessmen and intellectuals, were brought together at Arta, Djibouti. Over 2,500 individuals stayed together for more than four months in Arta to examine the causes of the Somali conflict, to assess its damaging effects and to explore ways out of the tragedy. There were days of gloom when peace and national reconciliation appeared to be beyond the reach of the participants. The goodwill and generosity of the people of Djibouti, their resourceful Government and the tenacity of President Ismail kept Somali hopes alive and succeeded in precluding the failure of the peace initiative.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh and his dedicated officials were competent facilitators and caring compatriots, but ultimately it was Somali civil society which found in itself a reservoir of wisdom and the willingness to forgive. Traditional Somali methods of peacemaking and bridge-building were instrumental in leading to the selection of 650 individuals as official delegates. The delegates assigned the responsibility of drafting a national charter to a small group. A national Charter which enshrines the rule of law, decentralized democratic self-governance, human rights, the recognition of the rights of women and minority groups, and a market-led economy was passed by the Assembly of delegates.

The next step was the selection of the 245-member Parliament. After protracted negotiations, the segments of Somali civil society surprised themselves and the world by selecting their representatives to Parliament. The members of Parliament quickly elected the Speaker, Deputy Speakers and other officers of the House. The Parliament discharged its responsibility of electing the President of the Republic with unexpected maturity and dispatch. In a word, the election of the President was free, fair and very transparent.

As president-elect, I took a large delegation of more than 90 members of our parliament and other prominent citizens to Mogadishu and Baidoa. The reception by the people, despite the misgivings of many, was overwhelmingly positive.

One of my constitutional responsibilities is to appoint a Prime Minister, who will in turn form a national Government fairly soon. With the formation of a national Government, Somalia will finally be on its feet and will take its rightful place in all international forums. What remains for us to do within the country is to bring aboard those who did not participate in the Arta peace and national reconciliation conference. We would like to rely on our proven methods of openness, goodwill and ongoing dialogue to resolve all outstanding political issues. The Somali people, however, have spoken, and their principled position is to have a representative Government of national unity, regional autonomy, equitable access to national resources, rule of law and human rights.

A democratic Somalia which is at peace with itself and with its neighbours will be a strong and productive Member of the United Nations. Somalia's association with the United Nations has been significant, though it has been troubled in recent years. The collapse of the Somali State and the ensuing civil strife created serious difficulties for a United Nations presence in Somalia. The generous attempts of the United Nations to respond to the humanitarian disaster in the country have, unfortunately, led to loss of life for United Nations staff. We regret deeply the loss of life of United Nations personnel; on behalf of the Somali Government and the people of Somalia, I would like to extend my condolences to the families that lost loved ones in the line of duty in Somalia.

A Somali Government which is the offspring of the efforts of Somali civil society is bound to be responsive to the demands of a renewed, democratized and energized United Nations. The new Somalia and its Third Republic are willing to rededicate themselves to an international legal framework which values the rights of the child, which is committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and which is ready to pledge full support for the effective institutionalization of the International Criminal Court at Rome. Segments of Somali civil society and Somali State actors are willing to be part of the global policy networks which are in a position to address global policy issues of poverty, debt relief, conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, environment and sustainable development. A renewed, energized and democratized United Nations will take the lead in the eradication of poverty, in ushering in freedom from fear and in facing confidently the challenges of globalization.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada.

Mr. Mitchell (Grenada): A gathering of such significance convened so early in the new millennium gives hope for the strengthening of cooperation among Governments so that humankind, especially the poor, can be better served. This historic occasion affords us an opportunity to reflect on the unique nature of the United Nations as the body that recognizes the sovereign equality of all States.

At this point, Grenada would like to join the rest of the civilized world in mourning the loss of United Nations staff members in West Timor.

Since its inception, the United Nations has had a major influence on shaping the modern world and on raising the standard of living of millions of peoples. Today, the people of Grenada thank the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all the other bodies that have positively influenced our lives, and we praise them for their decolonization achievements.

Severe poverty, crippling debt servicing, diseases including HIV/AIDS, disrespect for human life and disregard for the natural environment continue to threaten human progress. Debt forgiveness will go a long way to bringing relief to poor countries. Debt forgiveness is not a financial loss to the global economy. It provides an opportunity for the economic stimulation of the depressed and stagnant parts of the world's economy. Debt forgiveness is a necessary prerequisite for the furtherance of globalization and economic development. Grenada requests lending countries, financial institutions and funding agencies to proclaim complete debt forgiveness for all developing countries, especially for the heavily indebted poor countries.

Grenada also advocates the establishment of a disaster relief fund to facilitate quick responses for victims of the hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes and other natural disasters that strike us with such frequency and ferocity. I also want to place on record the support of the Government of Grenada for the proposal by the Commission on Global Governance that a well-equipped standing United Nations volunteer force be established.

Grenada renews its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, until the basic needs of life — food, shelter, health and education — are satisfied, universal attainment of all human rights will remain very elusive. We urge greater effort in those areas.

The widening gap between developed and developing countries in the midst of these rapid technological advances must be narrowed. The people of Grenada, therefore, in this age of information and communication technology, call on the United Nations, through consultations, to establish programmes and activities that will assist developing countries to bridge this digital divide.

A cartel of powerful high-tax nations has launched a destructive high-powered attack on low-tax countries, accusing us of "anti-competitive" tax measures. They have used adverse publicity techniques deliberately to condemn and harm our economies. They have threatened various sanctions and have sought to block access to capital funds in multilateral organizations, as well as to impose financial protectionism and total ostracism. As a small island economy without much leverage, Grenada requests that this forum call on the G-7 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries to multilateralize their approach and to involve the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to serve the interests of all concerned.

I cannot leave this podium without paying tribute to the Government and the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan for the assistance given to countries like Grenada in agriculture, fishing, health care, education, culture and infrastructure. Indeed, the Republic of China on Taiwan truly subscribes to the words of that great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, who said, "Give a man a fish and you satisfy his needs for a day; teach a man to fish and you supply his needs for many, many days." This is why the Government of Grenada continues to advocate full membership for the Republic of China on Taiwan in this body.

Finally, in today's world of rapid technological advances we must never allow technology to take precedence over humanity. The Government of Grenada stands ready to work with civil society to ensure that the United Nations has the ability to respond to the needs of the people in the twenty-first century.

Let the people be always our priority, and let us be guided permanently by Almighty God.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Barak Sope Maautamate, Prime Minister and Minister for Public Service of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Mr. Maautamate (Vanuatu): The people of the Republic of Vanuatu, whom I am honoured to represent here, are proud to be part of this Millennium Summit on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

When the Republic of Vanuatu was formally admitted as a full Member of the United Nations in 1981, the fundamental ideals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter became part of the framework for our nation-building strategy and a source of inspiration in our common endeavours to create a better world for our future generations.

For the United Nations to maintain credibility in its central role of promoting a just and peaceful world in the twenty-first century, it will be important and necessary that its structures, its decision-making processes, its plans of actions, its focus and its directions relate to the daily interests and concerns of the majority of ordinary people on this planet — including children, the disabled, women and unemployed youth — and not just the interests and concerns of the richer and the more powerful Members of our Organization.

The millennium report of the Secretary-General, which we commend, provides this Summit a good background as well as clear options for us to redirect and refocus the United Nations in its primary functions of assisting Member States in raising the standards of living of their respective populations.

From our small island perspective, we feel it is also important to further stress the crucial place of a number of issues, including the following. At the current rate of population growth in developing countries, including Vanuatu, greater and easier access to education for our growing populations will become the greatest challenge for us all in this millennium. Other important issues include: providing improved health services to the poorest and most remote parts of our nations; increased gender equity at all levels of societies; better cooperation and rationalization of resource use between the United Nations and other multilateral bodies; a global village fully committed to peace, justice, law and order, mutual respect and tolerance; and a recognition of and respect for the fundamental right to self-determination.

Over the past 50 years much progress has been achieved in economic and social advancement globally, and the role of the United Nations, other multilateral agencies and bilateral partners in this regard deserves our full recognition and continuing support. Much more, however, remains to be done. It must be a priority for the United Nations to fully address the issues raised at this Summit.

The Pacific region and its development needs deserve due consideration in the new millennium. The region covers the largest area of ocean, contains huge marine resources, and has dynamic and diverse cultural and traditional values and a young and growing population. An earlier proposal for a separate Pacific grouping within the United Nations warrants serious consideration.

The recent admission of Tuvalu, as the 189th member, is greatly welcomed by the people and the Government of Vanuatu. It is our prayer that this millennium will see a further increase in the Pacific-island membership. We would also like to suggest that the decision-making processes of the United Nations and related institutions based in the Pacific region that concern development programmes for our islands should be fully reviewed in the context of priorities established by the Pacific-island Member countries. We are concerned that some powerful countries are using regional institutions and programmes to promote their own interests in our region. We must not allow this trend to continue.

Despite our meagre resources, the Republic of Vanuatu is proud to be able to participate for the first time in United Nations peacekeeping missions, in East Timor and Bosnia, in addition to our small contribution to regional peace-monitoring missions in the Pacific region. The recent tragic killing of three United Nations personnel in West Timor by militant groups must be condemned by this Summit. We urge the Indonesian Government to take appropriate steps to positively and effectively address the situation.

As world leaders, we have time and time again expressed serious concerns and dissatisfaction because certain decisions and actions by the United Nations or

its organs were not consistent with the purposes and intentions of the Charter. However, nothing has been done to right the wrong. At this Summit, we must recognize that when such errors are identified it becomes our joint responsibility — and it is in the best interest of this, our international family of nations and peoples — to make sure that the most appropriate actions are taken, and taken soon, to rectify such errors, so that we can embark on the new millennium with a clear conscience.

In this context, as an active member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which is committed to promoting and safeguarding the Melanesian identity, values, traditions and rights, the Republic of Vanuatu calls on the United Nations to review the political and legal basis of its own undertakings in the 1950s and 1960s in relation to the fundamental rights and fate of Melanesian brothers and sisters in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular in West Papua.

The continuing disputes and concerns raised about the legality of the United Nations-endorsed instruments which had been concluded during those years, such as the New York Agreement of 1962 to govern the United Nations administration of the so-called Act of Free Choice in West Papua, is a clear example of challenging the integrity and validity of United Nations resolutions at that time. This is simply a mockery of the fundamental principles of human rights and self-determination clearly enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations cannot and must not in this new millennium continue to turn a blind eye to its own past failures, which have lead to three long, agonizing decades of injustice, abuse of human rights and guerrilla warfare in West Papua. It is morally, politically and legally wrong to do so. The United Nations has competent agencies and institutions, such as the Committee of 24 or the International Court of Justice, which should be tasked with looking into this or give an advisory opinion. The Netherlands, as the former colonial authority, should also recognize that it has some responsibility in helping to resolve the unfortunate situation of West Papua in a peaceful and transparent manner.

The resolutions we will be adopting on the new directions we are setting for the United Nations for the new millennium can have a significant impact on the future of our global relations and the lives of the world's people, particularly in the small and poor countries. It is a challenging responsibility. We do not want to fail this time around.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Lamine Sidimé, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea.

Mr. Sidimé (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, may I inform the Assembly of the serious events that have occurred in my country, Guinea, over the past 48 hours. In fact, as we met to take up the challenge of international cooperation in a peaceful and civilized fashion, my country, Guinea, a Member of the United Nations since 12 December 1958, a country that hosts more than 800,000 refugees among a population of 7 million inhabitants, had just undergone attacks on its international borders by assailants coming from Liberia and Sierra Leone. As I speak, fighting is going on to drive back the attackers. Through appropriate procedures, Guinea will soon be taking this matter up with the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of West African States and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity. Guinea calls on the international community to join it in condemning unreservedly that unjust aggression.

I would like first to fulfil the lofty mission, Mr. President, of conveying to you the warm greetings of the people, the Government and the President of the Republic of Guinea, General Lansana Conté, whose commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter has never wavered since our admission to the United Nations family in 1958. The delegation of the Republic of Guinea is pleased and honoured to be taking part in this Millennium Summit together with illustrious world leaders, whose presence in such great numbers undoubtedly attests to the influence of the United Nations and the continued interest in its action.

To all those who have made this event possible, we extend our deepest thanks. In particular, we thank Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and we welcome his untiring efforts to strengthen the Organization. This is also the time and place to pay a tribute to all those whose clear-sightedness and vision have made it possible to establish this wonderful instrument for cooperation among nations, which for more than half a century has

been seeking to provide a new basis and new guidelines for international relations.

We are duty-bound to keep alive the dream of these eminent visionaries and to improve the instrument that they developed to serve a better, fairer, more humane and more brotherly world. The people and the Government of Guinea have faith in the United Nations, but it is our conviction that after all the upheavals that have taken place since 1945, and given the challenges facing mankind for the future, the time has come to readapt the missions and the structures of our Organization.

Guinea pleads for more humanity and less exclusion in the United Nations. I say less exclusion because it is high time that the various parts of the world were equitably represented in the Security Council. In particular, the under-representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America among the permanent membership of the Security Council needs to be reviewed. Failure to do so would be ignoring the achievements in relations among States of the world over the past 50 years, and it would mean continuing to live on the basis of the ideas and views of 1945.

I speak of greater humanity because the United Nations must be given sufficient resources to enable it to intervene in the struggle against poverty and the suffering of peoples and States in a large part of the world. After having committed itself to peoples to carry out decolonization, the United Nations must now be put in a position to carry forward its humanitarian and life-saving mission, which would make it possible for the community of nations to achieve what has been the driving force of the spread of progress in the nations of the North: the liberation of energies and access for the greatest possible number of people to knowledge, employment and consumption.

The means exist today, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan has highlighted this in his important report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". These means include, inter alia, the available savings accumulated by nations, technological and scientific progress, and the renewal of a humanism that is broadly shared by the people of our times with the aim of safeguarding and promoting human dignity. These achievements of all mankind must help improve the lot of the disadvantaged people on earth.

Guinea was one of the first African countries to join the United Nations and has been a member since 12 December 1958. Guinea, classified among the least developed countries, has a per capita income of $575, and alone, without any assistance, for more than 10 years has been meeting its international and humanitarian obligations while bearing the burden of subregional insecurity and the human, environmental and economic burden of the presence of more than 800,000 refugees, of which almost 12,000 new arrivals were registered last week alone.

Among the community of nations, Africa and its problems do not seem to be a major area of concern, despite professions of good faith. In spite of everything, there is room for hope, because the ideas and generous solutions contained in Mr. Kofi Annan's report are fully supported by my country, which will work with those who share those values and approaches to ensure that they are implemented.

I conclude by wishing us all every success in our work. Long live international cooperation! Long live the United Nations!

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nagoum Yamassoum, Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Yamassoum (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I convey the greetings of the President of the Republic of Chad, His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby, its Government and people, and express the hope that this exceptional Summit will lead to exceptional decisions measuring up to the event.

I also congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his important and happy initiative in organizing this Millennium Summit to mark the entry of our world into the new century. Let us pay tribute to him for the clear and objective way in which he expressed the exceptional concerns of humankind in his report (A/54/2000) before us at this Summit. It gives us the opportunity to review together the past century and consider the prospects for this century so that the world may be more just and more human for the vast majority of its inhabitants.

The picture emerging from more than 50 years of communal life in our global Organization, whose main objective is international cooperation for the elimination of war and poverty, is very dark. How can

we be happy with an international system which has reduced more than 3 billion human beings to almost complete poverty, while fewer than a billion people hold nearly 70 per cent of the revenue of the planet? The consequences are that millions of men, women and children know nothing of the joy or inner peace of satisfying the most elementary needs.

The millennium that is coming to an end has undoubtedly been the hardest in the history of humankind, with its wars, tensions, epidemics and catastrophes. Our world in the new millennium has an enemy named poverty, an enemy with two faces: extreme poverty and insolent opulence. Until we succeed in bringing these two extremes together and introducing more humanism into their relations, the third millennium will be no different from the second.

Those most deserving our consideration are the most numerous: the developing countries, particularly those of Africa, whose situations continue to deteriorate while the others continue progressing towards ever more growth and prosperity. Let us take care that this does not become fatal.

We, the leaders, certainly have our share of responsibility, because we are not managing to meet all the expectations of our peoples. But is our will alone enough in a universe where all the economic, financial, industrial and technological powers escape our grasp and transcend the frontiers of national States, or even groups of them? What can we do when our own resources, however big they may be, do not, because of the selfishness of the richest, enable us to respond to the legitimate expectations of our fellow citizens?

The past century was essentially dominated by injustice resulting from an uncontrolled chase after profit. The one that is beginning should learn the lessons of the past to construct a better world. To do this, it must be based on humanism and justice. To ultimately overcome the scourges from which most of humanity suffers, let us try at least to reduce and mitigate their effects. Today's world has the intellectual and material means to do so. There is only one thing missing — the will to achieve it. This Summit provides us with a historic occasion to set the milestones for a new world.

The vision and ambition that we nourish for humankind are the same as we have for our country. The Government of Chad has been trying for more than a decade to respond to the demands for liberty and well-being of a people which has been deprived since independence. On this subject, the Doba oil project, which has caused such great controversy throughout the world, reflects the great plans we have for our country. This project is unusual in that it involves two States, Chad and Cameroon, financial international institutions and civil society. It is seen as a pilot project for development, typical of the new partnership that should underpin international relations.

Our Government has made efforts to overcome the reluctance about this project because the people of Chad have been waiting for oil for over 30 years. Moreover, we need the resources of this oil to promote vital sectors, such as health, education, rural development, the environment and infrastructures, which cannot be financed indefinitely by foreign aid. Finally, economic and social progress in Chad is the only way to support freedom and democracy in the country. I take the opportunity of this Summit to restate the gratitude of the people of Chad to all States, institutions and persons who have contributed to the happy outcome of this project.

It is unanimously accepted that democracy and poverty often do not go well together. Nevertheless, the Republic of Chad, which has been classified as one of the poorest nations in the world, has for more than a decade kept up with democracy. The presidential and parliamentary elections to take place in a few months will, through the transparency and legality that we intend to give them, mark our determination to support democratic practices in Chadian society. Shall we have the support of all our friends and partners to keep up and resist possible upheavals that could provoke poverty in any emerging democracy?

The system of consensual management of public affairs, which our country has adopted, shows our wish to create conditions of stability and calm, which are necessary for progress. Peace and stability are the foundation of development, which in turn reinforces them. We hope that calm and peace will prevail in the whole of the African continent and the rest of the planet. The many conflicts presently rending Africa, particularly the de facto break-up of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, the fratricidal wars in Angola, Sierra Leone and Burundi, or between Ethiopia and Eritrea, or the tragic events recalled by the previous speaker, are unacceptable and anachronistic.

The Republic of Chad solemnly appeals to all belligerents to pull themselves together and think of the millions of women and children who are terrorized every day, and who are asking neither for gold nor diamonds — sometimes, not even freedom — but simply peace, and even more simply, life.

We also appeal to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to act with more conviction and firmness, if necessary, to put an end to these ruinous and murderous wars in Africa.

While the rich countries continue to spend billions of dollars on weapons of all kinds to fight — we really do not know whom or what — the poor nations, particularly of Africa, are fighting, almost empty-handed, against a real, even if invisible, enemy: the AIDS virus.

My country, while welcomimg the latest measures taken by the World Bank and the multinational corporations to fight this epidemic, feel that more and better can be done.

If only a quarter of the expenditure on weapons were to be directed towards the fight against HIV/AIDS, particularly to care and research, the pandemic would already have been eliminated.

Chad calls upon the international community as a whole, and the industrialized countries in particular, to show more understanding for the economic difficulties of Africa.

In particular, this concern could begin by dealing with the debt problem which is such an obstacle to economic and social recovery in Africa and perpetuates the vicious circle of poverty. Palliative measures consisting of rescheduling or alleviating the debt will not solve the basic problem.

If we sincerely want to reduce this flagrant inequality afflicting Africa, the developed countries and international financial institutions must take bolder measures by simply cancelling the debt. And that is not all. These initiatives must be accompanied by greater aid and greater foreign private investments if we truly want Africa not to be marginalized in the world's economy.

Political and social reforms introduced in most of the countries of the continent in the past decade should encourage such measures.

Putting an end to human suffering and to the lack of understanding among men and States and preserving nature are the great challenges that we will have to face with greater conviction and which require new rules in relations among nations.

From this standpoint, the United Nations is an irreplaceable tool to calm conflicts, increase cooperation, eliminate poverty, injustice and arbitrary actions: in brief, to reconcile mankind with itself.

To do this, it must be restructured and be given enough resources to face the responsibilities and hopes placed in it. It must also be restructured in order better to perform one of the basic purposes for which it was created, namely, peacekeeping.

This activity has developed considerably in recent years and has become multi-faceted and multi-dimensional and includes various kinds of preventive action. It has to rely on the entire machinery for settling disputes peacefully, but in the last resort more curative action may be needed which requires more resources and firm determination to give it deterrent force and make it productive.

The succession of recantations and tomfoolery that we have seen in recent years, in Bosnia and Sierra Leone, is unlikely to strengthen the credibility of our Organization.

The peacekeepers must be given sufficient means to impose peace and, if necessary, by force. There must be clear unequivocal resolutions on the use of force in peacekeeping because the peacekeepers must not serve as easy prey for warmongers of all kinds.

The United Nations must also operate on an egalitarian basis that respects the present structure of the world. Nobody can ignore the fact today that power is no longer solely a matter of military force. The international system cannot continue to function with its eyes closed to the emergence of new Powers, to the changes in the position of the old Powers and to the far-reaching changes which have taken place in international society since the end of the Second World War, changes in the very concept of power.

For all these reasons, the Republic of Chad is in favour of the reform of the Security Council. An expansion to include other continents would bring about greater democracy in its decision-making and more equity in its international relations and would reflect the real situation in international society.

These principles, which are so dear to us, must lead us to admit the Republic of China, Taiwan, to our Organization. This would constitute justice for a State which, more than many others, fulfils all the conditions of State power and which contributes to peace and development in the world.

I should like to conclude by expressing the hope that through our initiatives and decisions, this Summit, which is inaugurating our entry into the new millennium, will be different from all others, and leave its mark on international cooperation.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See.

Cardinal Sodano *(spoke in French)*: I have the honour to convey to the Assembly the cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and his encouragement to the representatives of the world's countries assembled here in New York to reaffirm their confidence in the work of the United Nations. It is the fervent hope of the Holy See that, at the dawn of the third millennium, the United Nations will contribute to the building of a new civilization for the benefit of all mankind, a civilization which has been called the "civilization of love".

The first duty of the United Nations is to preserve and promote peace. This was the essential aim of the founders of the Organization and it remains an imperative today. Still too often war brings affliction and suffering to peoples. In the face of new outbreaks of violence, especially civil and ethnic conflicts, the United Nations is duty-bound to intervene within the framework of its Charter to restore peace.

In the name of the Pope I pay tribute to all that the United Nations has already done in this field, and I pay homage to the memory of the soldiers and civilian personnel who have died in the course of peacekeeping operations.

The second duty of the United Nations is the promotion of development. Even today a significant part of the world's population lives in conditions of poverty, which is an offense to human dignity. Furthermore, other evils, such as war, the destruction of the environment, natural disasters and epidemics are often exacerbated by the presence of poverty. How can we not draw attention to the fact that the majority of these scourges affect Africa in the first place and how can we not ask that Africa be given special attention and that efforts be made which are really capable of meeting its needs.

The third duty of the United Nations is the promotion of human rights. The struggle for human rights is never ending and I would make special mention of the first of these: the right to life, which is so endangered today. Pope John Paul II expresses his support for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to take place next year in South Africa and he encourages every initiative aimed at preventing the spread of racism and intolerance, but, in addition to this concrete approach to human rights, human rights must be brought into sharper focus by giving them a solid ethical basis for otherwise they will remain fragile and without foundations.

A fourth duty of the United Nations is that of guaranteeing the equality of all its Members. It is imperative that all be heard when common decisions are taken. In this respect I would recall the position of the Holy See with regard to sanctions imposed by the Organization. A process of revision should be put in place in each case, so as to ensure that these measures will not weigh most of all on innocent segments of the population.

Christians, who this year have been commemorating the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, feel solidarity for the efforts that the international community is undertaking so that the world of the future may be delivered from violence, injustice and selfishness. The Catholic Church proposes to contribute to this immense work above all through its proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, since, without spiritual progress, the material progress of nations will be vain and illusory. This conviction has guided the Church throughout its history, and it is also its commitment for the third millennium.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sabo Nassirou, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of the Niger.

Mr. Nassirou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Tandja Mamadou, President of the Republic of the Niger, who would have liked to be here today, has, to his great regret, been unable to travel to New York. He has therefore asked me, on his behalf, to transmit the following message to the Assembly:

"Whereas mankind has achieved considerable technical and technological progress and has raised the production of goods and services to an unprecedented level, billions of individuals are lacking the vital minimum because of poverty. The problem of poverty represents one of the major challenges that the authorities of the Niger have resolved to take up because it is true that they undermine the foundation of all national economic and social development policies and strategies.

"Investigations carried out nationally show that 63 per cent of the population of the Niger lives in poverty, and 34 per cent in extreme poverty. The poverty threshold has been defined as $100 per annum per capita in an urban environment, and $70 per annum per capita in a rural environment. As to the thresholds of extreme poverty, they have been set at two thirds of these sums.

"The great majority of the poor in the Niger live in a rural environment. The signs of this poverty are clear at various levels of the national economy. Thus, one person out of three has access to a health centre, one child out of three goes to school, one adult out of five is literate, and only 50 per cent of the population have access to drinking water.

"In addition to this most alarming picture comes a high population growth rate and low income. Thus, the overwhelming majority of the people of the Niger are among the billion inhabitants of our planet who live on less than $1 per day.

"In terms of poverty, it is easy to see that the social sectors and subsectors that are most affected are those of basic education — primary education, literacy, training — health, population, drinking water, hygiene, sanitation and living conditions. The vulnerable target groups are essentially women, who are crushed by the weight of domestic tasks, and young people, victims of underemployment and forced to seek work outside of the country. These vulnerable groups are also subject to illiteracy, especially in rural areas.

"On the whole, all these aspects contribute, to a large extent, to signing away the policies and strategies for development, to making the national economy a low-performing one and to accentuating the deterioration of an environment already made too fragile by the climatic hazards found in Sahelo-Saharan regions like ours.

"This is why, on the basis of our experience in the management of natural resources, we have produced a national plan oriented towards the fight against desertification, water and sustainable development, energy, urban environment, biodiversity and climate change.

"The Niger has already acceded to the new strategic framework to combat poverty proposed by the Bretton Woods institutions during the Summit on growth and poverty in Africa, held in Libreville on 18 and 19 January 2000. That Summit, in which many African heads of State or Government participating in this Assembly took part, aimed to examine the prospects of the continent at the threshold of the new millennium and the challenges to be taken up to accelerate economic growth and eliminate poverty.

"Strengthened by the legitimacy and institutional stability emerging from the free and transparent elections held last November, the Niger started a very open participatory process, with a view to elaborating, in the very short term, a strategic document to combat poverty. This new framework, beyond any doubt, is a most dynamic and effective measure in the fight against poverty because it is based on greater participation of citizens in its elaboration and on a better reading of the complex diagnosis of the nature of the determining factors of poverty.

"Our strategy for fighting poverty gives priority to the search for a better fit between healthy economic management and sustainable human development, based principally on the agro-pastoral sector. This strategy is the backbone of the future economic and social development plan for 2000-2004, which the Government has just started putting together in order to respond to the many challenges of the millennium. In this endeavour we are fully aware that outside effort cannot replace domestic effort.

"This is why we are so firmly convinced that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, particular attention must be devoted to giving

concrete form to the universal vocation of the world Organization. Peace, security and sustainable development are highly important concepts that require the much-desired expansion of the Security Council, and shall no longer simply be the exclusive responsibility of a club of military, economic and financial powers.

"Because Africa is the subject of a large share of international initiatives and intends to become an active player, it must take a significant role in the reformed Security Council. And in Africa, there are countries that are able to play a determining role."

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ndombasi (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I ask the interpreters to forgive me for not having submitted a text. I did not do so because I would like to depart from the beaten path.

What can one recommend to the United Nations to make its peacekeeping work more effective? I should like to link that question to the ideas that a great mind of this century developed in a text entitled *Civilization and Its Discontents*, which led him to believe that there was a death wish among speaking beings. Unfortunately, that same death snatched the pen from his hand, and he was unable to further elaborate on the idea of the death wish and the discontent in civilization.

There is indeed a discontent in civilization. It is not new. It is always reflected in a phenomenon whereby appearances are constantly shifting and concepts are caught up in a mad dance. That is what happened in the case of the League of Nations. The author of *Civilization and Its Discontents* wondered how the hordes that came from the place where such wonderful works as the "Emperor Concerto", the "Musical Offering" and the "Ode to Joy" were written could have brought about that discontent in civilization, the First World War.

Here I should like to jump ahead to say that civilization does not of itself dispel any discontent. The United Nations is also experiencing this shifting of appearances and the relentless devaluation of certain phrases, such as "respect for national borders". Today there is no compunction about violating this principle, as our country can testify: for two years, as the Huns did in days gone by, hordes that are apparently civilized — to judge by their songs, which are gentle murmurs, and which I personally adore — have been trampling under foot concepts such as "respect for borders", "respect for national sovereignty" and "respect for national resources". Those people are here in this Hall. They have been in our country for two years and have given no indication that they have any intention of leaving. They remain in our country, thus violating the principles on which this Organization was founded. No one is forcing them to leave, and they have impertinently announced that they are not ready to leave.

Patriotism and nationalism dictate that with our limited means we must do everything we can to put an end to this violation of the United Nations Charter and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. I say this to the Africans present: "It is staring you in the face: the crossing of your borders, the threat to your national independence and the raiding of your countries' wealth; it does not affect us alone. This new race of Huns could do the same thing to you tomorrow, because the discontent in civilization today demonstrates that civilization in itself is not enough to dispel this unhappiness, and so it will continue."

Given our experience, therefore, what must we tell the United Nations so that henceforth it will not be satisfied with merely observing what is happening, but will implement its own resolutions? We are not going to wait 40 years, as in the case of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) on Palestine; only now are attempts being made to implement that. We are not going to wait 40 years for a Camp David-style meeting to take place, or 40 years for the President of the United States to act before Security Council resolutions 1234 (1999), 1291 (2000) and 1304 (2000), which affect us, are implemented. We are not going to wait that long. Our patriotism and spirit of nationalism demand that we put an end to the violation of those principles that have brought us all here. Such violations make those who have occupied our country for two years unworthy of participating in this millennium celebration.

Fortunately, the millennium has not yet begun; it will begin on 1 January 2001. The United Nations still has time to ensure the fulfilment of our declaration that

we will not enter the third millennium as an occupied and humiliated country. That is the plea that I am making to the Assembly on behalf of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who is dealing with the business of war because of the occupation, the seizure of our wealth and the violation of our borders, and therefore cannot join us. Just as some prayed on the Acropolis and others on the Golden Bridge, I offer up my prayer on the banks of the Hudson, where I invite all present, whatever continent they are from, to ensure that those who are still in our country return home and give us a chance to remedy the damage caused by the satrap of whom all are aware, who for 32 years devastated our country, polluted minds and destroyed the morale of our people. Help us to send these people back home. Help us to put an end to the war.

How do wars end? How did the war of 1939-1945 end? Through direct talks between the Allies and the Nazis. How did the Viet Nam war end? The American eagle had to go to see the Viet Cong and talk to them. How did the Algerian war end? General de Gaulle himself yielded to the need to speak with the Algerians so that the war could be ended. How has the war between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, which has gone on for centuries, begun to come to an end? Through direct talks between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. What about the war between the victims of aggression in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundi aggressors?

How will it all end? Through direct talks between aggressed and aggressor. If other subterfuges are resorted to, it is because there are some who do not want the war to end. War is a profitable business for the aggressors. They are occupying our country, waging war against us and stripping our soil of the diamonds, gold, cobalt and prized lumber that their countries do not have. It is a rapacious war. If the United Nations asks us how to help it make its actions more effective in the future, I would respond by referring to other activities in which we approach a subject thinking we know what we are doing. We only think we know, but this is a lesson taught by delirious psychotics.

We are facing a situation in which people are leaving their country without provocation. None of our soldiers is abroad. These people enter our country and declare deliriously that they are there to stay. Since we have suffered misfortunes, they come and settle in our country. This is counter to the principles that have brought us here.

It is therefore quite futile to list and diagnose the evils underlying the re-emergent malaise in our civilizations if we do not operate on the basis of principles such as absolute respect, in keeping with the United Nations Charter, for the borders of others, and absolute respect, in keeping with the United Nations Charter, of the national and political independence of others. If we do not base our actions on those principles, this malaise will continue and those psychotics will bring nothing to the United Nations. Our task is to ensure that the United Nations works effectively and does not appear to be going around in circles.

Whatever the consequences, we are determined to defend our rights and to eject by all means necessary those intruders in our country who insist on staying put. Our presidency will paraphrase the words of Corneille, spoken by Auguste: Has destiny, to injure us, chosen yet another of our loved ones to seduce? Let fate enlist the devil to the task — we are masters of ourselves and of our country.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain.

Shaikh Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure to address this important international gathering on behalf of His Highness Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Amir of the State of Bahrain, and to convey to all participants his greetings and hope that this Summit will achieve its noble goals and strengthen the role of the United Nations and adherence to its Charter and noble principles.

Bahrain truly feels fully part of this vast gathering of this open and diverse United Nations community, for my country, throughout its history, has embodied these very values as a member of the great family of humanity through its tangible and continuous coexistence with various cultures, beliefs and principles. Bahrain continues, as it has throughout the ages, to take the lead and to serve as an example of this among its neighbours and within its region. Bahrain has consistently confirmed its pioneering role in free trade and economic openness. Furthermore, it has been a symbol of ideal coexistence and lasting peace with all its neighbours, as proven by over 5,000 years of

history. This is a responsibility that Bahrain will willingly continue to bear in the future, as it has in the past.

Having become a Member of the Organization in 1971, after attaining full political independence and the exercise of full sovereignty over all its islands, territory and territorial waters, as endorsed by the Security Council, the State of Bahrain has fully and actively participated in all meetings and activities of the United Nations. It has fulfilled all its membership obligations, both regionally and internationally, as was manifest during its term as a member of the Security Council in 1998 and 1999.

Today, as we, the leaders and representatives of the States Members of this Organization, meet here to contemplate our future course, it is incumbent upon us to take this opportunity to reflect on our present situation and on the challenges posed by political, economic, scientific and cultural developments and changes. These developments and changes not only have their positive aspects, but also give rise to certain concerns and apprehensions, for example with regard to globalization and such issues as international peace and security and the fight against poverty, organized crime, terrorism, extremism and threats to the environment.

Our gathering should offer an opportunity to identify the future priorities of the new century, in particular the issues of maintaining international peace and security and achieving peaceful and amicable solutions to all regional and international conflicts, given the negative effects of such conflicts on world progress and prosperity. The conflict and wars witnessed by the Middle East region for over half a century have proved, through their draining of the resources and potentials of States and peoples of the region and their hindering of development projects, the necessity and importance of such solutions.

Today, while efforts are ongoing in the search for a solution to this conflict, we hope that the efforts of the sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America in particular, along with other regional and international parties, will succeed in achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that will ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in establishing their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. The negotiations and contact between the parties to the peace process have proved that Jerusalem is the key to peace, because of its distinguished status for Arabs and Muslims. Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian territories occupied since 1967 is an important element in achieving a comprehensive, just and durable peace.

Attention to the future of humanity and safeguarding it from other dangers such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction should also be among the priorities of the future and the new century. Ensuring respect for human rights while ensuring that such rights are not exploited as a political pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of other states, promoting dialogue and mutual enrichment between civilizations, and the establishment of regional and international cooperation based on partnership and mutual interest should also be among these priorities.

The lofty purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter in order to achieve justice, peace, security and stability throughout the world require us to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to restructure and reform its organs and work, in particular the Security Council, which requires transparency in its work and equitable representation in its membership. The role of the General Assembly in dealing with peace, security and justice, should also be confirmed.

In conclusion, we would like to commend His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his sincere and unceasing efforts to strengthen and invigorate the role of the United Nations in enhancing security, stability and peace throughout the world.

May the peace and grace of God be upon you.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mamadu Iaia Djalo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Communities of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Djalo (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): It is a great honour and privilege for us to be present at the Millennium Summit representing His Excellency Mr. Kumba Yalá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, who transmits to you the following message.

> "Gathered at the highest level at the Millennium Summit, our momentous meeting conveys our loyalty to common ideals and objectives, and recognizes the validity and

importance of the principles and norms upon which our collective action is based, as defined in the Charter of the United Nations.

"The spirit of shared responsibility that drives our Organization and inspires our work is a precious conquest that we must preserve, reinforce and adapt to the new times.

"It is imperative to Guinea-Bissau that the capacity of the United Nations to carry out an ever-increasing role in international relations be strengthened. In this respect, we attribute great importance to the revitalization of the General Assembly and the rationalization of its agenda, just as we urge the reform of the Security Council with regard to an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members, keeping in mind the profound change the world has undergone, resulting in the greater representativeness of that organ and encouraging the principles of transparency and democracy in its work.

"With the political landscape undergoing rapid and profound changes, the current times show that those transformations, far from being temporary, are part of a process that results from the need of nations to develop in an evermore interdependent world. With globalization, the ties and interconnectedness of human destiny favour the emergence of objective conditions for the effective participation of all members of the international community in the search for solutions to the problems of the contemporary world.

"Efforts aimed at the establishment of peace and stability cannot, therefore, be dissociated from the efforts toward the economic and social development of the less fortunate.

"These efforts should be undertaken as a global action, coherent and united, based on a structural transformation of the economies of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, with a view to establishing the basis for sustainable socio-economic development.

"This position should, obviously, be based on our own efforts, as much as in the capacity to reorient development policies in the direction of greater rationalization and efficiency, as in the search for definite solutions for the conflicts that still plague the world.

"While Guinea-Bissau has been shaken by turmoil throughout its history, the consistency of the path of our diplomacy is proof of the unequivocal continuity of our commitment to the grand ideals of the Charter of the United Nations.

"In this sense, our country is dedicated to the search for the right answers on the way to resolving the numerous crises that prevail in the different areas of the planet, particularly in our subregion of Africa.

"It is based on these principles that our country, Guinea-Bissau, reiterates its firm determination to contribute, in cooperation with the countries represented at this Forum, to the full realization of the noble objectives and the materialization of the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, in this, the threshold of the New Millennium."

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hersey Kyota, Chairman of the Delegation of Palau.

Mr. Kyota (Palau): Good afternoon and thank you for the privilege of addressing you all today. Before I continue, I would like to extend the warm greetings of His Excellency Kuniwo Nakamura, the entire leadership and the people of the Republic of Palau. It is truly an honour and special privilege to be here with so many leaders on the auspicious occasion of the Millennium Summit. This Summit represents a very special opportunity to review the great achievements of the United Nations, take note of the vast global change which has occurred since the inception of the United Nations, examine the challenges which such change poses, and consider how to ensure that the United Nations can best meet the goals and serve the purposes set before it in the new millennium.

The Republic of Palau, being the last Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the Trusteeship Council to achieve independence, obviously had no opportunity to be heard when the original collaboration on the direction of the United Nations occurred. However, this is a new world with a new order, and a genuine need has arisen for new directions for the

United Nations. Palau is extremely pleased to welcome this opportunity to be heard on the subject this time around. The Republic of Palau firmly believes and hopes that the United Nations will strive to embrace the remaining non-member countries around the world, and to enable "We the peoples" together to forge a stronger international will and commitment to face all challenges before us in this new century.

As a former Trust Territory under the administration of the United States of America, Palau had the advantage of being able to safely observe the sometimes rough-and-tumble developments of the post-Second World War, post-colonial, nation-building era which followed the establishment of the United Nations from beneath the protection of a super-Power's umbrella. We were able to observe the many different models for addressing and adapting to the sea — changes which accompanied the period, while avoiding the need to adopt any one model ourselves. We thus were able to learn without the process of trial and error and all the costs and harmful effects which frequently come as a consequence of such a learning process. The stewardship of the United States of America provided Palau with the secure environment we needed to prepare ourselves to fully participate in the global community. For that, we express our sincere gratitude to the United States of America.

While part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Palau did not slumber. As noted, we were actively observing the world around us, noting its changes and marking the pros and cons of various systems as they rose and fell with the ever-shifting realities which surrounded them. We concluded — as virtually all international actors, governmental and non-governmental, have come to realize — that the most stable system, the one most resilient to change, the one most capable of growing from and even embracing dramatic change, is the system which offers the greatest opportunity for active participation by the widest margin of its members. Time and again, the flexibility required for such a system to operate on its own right enabled the system to effect a positive response to external challenges, including paradigm shifts outside its membership. This observation suggests to Palau two salient points for the future operations of the United Nations.

First, participation in the United Nations must be as wide as possible. The papers prepared by the United Nations Secretariat for this Summit correctly indicate that the old view of discrete nation-States has been overtaken by the realities of modern life. As it used to be said that no man is an island, the vast growth of transnational communications, multinational corporations, regional integration and non-governmental organizations now makes it possible to state that no island is an island either. In a very real and practical sense, there simply is no such thing as an entirely independent State today.

In the light of that fact, the standards for membership in this body must be revised and made more inclusive. There are a number of international actors which play a vital role in regional and global developments and will continue to play such a vital role for the foreseeable future, yet are denied participation in this body. At least one such actor, the Republic of China on Taiwan, also meets the criteria set forth in standard, traditional definitions of a State, yet still has no recognition in the United Nations. That is simply untenable and compromises the inclusive objectives of the United Nations, objectives repeatedly acknowledged in United Nations Secretariat papers. Instead, and in order to maintain and further the effectiveness of the United Nations, we should acknowledge the passing of the old view of the international community and provide for full, formal participation in the United Nations based on practical considerations of the significance of an entity as an international actor.

The second point which needs to be made is that participation must be as substantial as possible. By that, Palau means that decisions at every level of the United Nations must be open to real participation, that is, effective participation, on at least a representational basis by all Members. As the most obvious example of the failure of the United Nations to meet that need, we need only review a few basic facts concerning the Security Council. While the membership of the United Nations has increased from 51 at inception to 189 today, the membership of the Security Council has grown by only 10 members, none of which are permanent. The number and, more importantly, the identity of the permanent members have remained unchanged. As a result, the vast majority of all Members are denied genuine participation in what is arguably the most important organ of the United Nations. This, too, is untenable. There needs to be real reform of the Security Council, with a view to expanding real participation in that body. The Republic

of Palau foresees that a significant step towards this goal would be to welcome Japan and a few others as new permanent members of the Security Council.

Palau maintains that the steps suggested today are extremely important if the United Nations is to maintain and further its institutional effectiveness in the new global system. With that in place, we can then effectively address the challenging development issues facing the world in the new century. One primary challenge in the work of the United Nations is the issue of the environment. We must all individually demonstrate the necessary political will, from each and every Member State, to effectively combat environmental problems once and for all.

One alarming environmental issue we have inadequately provided remedies for and which threatens the survival not only of small island States but also that of every country in the world is environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability is everybody's challenge. Industrial activities and agribusiness production continue to have an adverse effect on our soils and waterways. In many developing countries, massive deforestation, harmful farming practices and uncontrolled urbanization are major causes of environmental degradation. All those specific problems must be collectively looked into and provided with a scale of solid efforts whereby every country continues to meet its economic needs without compromising the ability of our planet to provide for the needs of future generations.

In particular, my country strongly believes that every country must unequivocally demonstrate a rigorous political commitment to addressing one alarming environmental phenomenon, which is climate change. Evidence continues to mount and to demonstrate the inevitable reality of the impact of the emission of the so-called greenhouse gases that are responsible for global warming. The earth's atmosphere is warming at an alarming rate, and sea levels have risen at an unprecedented rate. The Republic of Palau, in recent years, has witnessed a devastating portent of this global phenomenon. The rising sea level has invaded our taro patches and our agricultural land, subsequently destroying some of our prime sources of daily nourishment. Some of our neighbouring Pacific countries have had an even more disastrous experience with rising sea levels. Many have been displaced from their homes and have statistically become part of the estimated 25 million "environmental refugees" forced from their homes.

The Republic of Palau, currently in possession of the chairmanship of the 16-island-member-State South Pacific Forum, is gravely concerned about the devastating impact of climate change on some of these island nations. As the inhabitants of a fragile ecosystem, we appeal to the rest of the international community to face up more aggressively to this inescapable reality.

Climate change is a global problem whose full devastating impact can be minimized only if all countries willingly contribute on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility. In connection with our differentiated responsibilities, a particular sense of urgency attaches to the implementation of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For there to be a genuine advance in our collective effort to combat climate change, the industrialized countries are called upon once again to commit themselves to the verifiable emissions limitation and reduction targets called for in the Kyoto Protocol. Such a commitment continues to be lacking, but it would essentially complete our first step towards reducing global warming. To demonstrate that global commitment, each of us must continue to remind ourselves that the challenge of addressing climate change is everybody's business. We, as responsible citizens of the international community, must collectively forge a solid political will to make the necessary changes, specifically those that are called for in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I once again appeal to representatives to be kind enough to keep silent and to listen to these very good speeches; this will also enable us to move forward more smoothly. I thank members for their kindness and cooperation in this regard.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Panapasi Nelesone, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tuvalu.

Mr. Nelesone (Tuvalu): It is a great honour and privilege to address the Millennium Summit on behalf of the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, who unfortunately has had to leave the Summit owing to some unforeseen but unavoidable urgent matters at home.

As the youngest member of this great family of independent nations, Tuvalu places the highest value on the work of the United Nations. Over the past three days, the high spirit of goodwill and commitment that has been enunciated as Member States have reflected on the future role of the United Nations has indeed given Tuvalu great inspiration and a sense of pride in having joined this Organization. It has also given Tuvalu the highest expectations, and great hopes for the success of the United Nations in promoting peace and prosperity for all mankind.

Peace is the absence of threat to the security and the survival of a nation. Without peace, there is no development and no progress. As with many of our island sisters and brothers in the Pacific and other regions, Tuvalu's severe capacity limitations and extreme environmental and economic vulnerability to external forces constitute the most serious threat to our survival. While we welcome the vast opportunities for all countries to be gained through the process of globalization, international indifference to the situation of Indo-Pacific societies has only led to the undermining of our small economies. Tuvalu therefore strongly supports the full development and adoption of an environmental vulnerability index that can better reflect the extreme capacity limitation and vulnerability of small island developing States.

In the same vein, the compelling findings about the consequences of global warming and climate change, in particular rising sea levels, are of the greatest concern to Tuvalu and to many other small island developing States. Already, some of our valuable land has totally disappeared, washed away by high seas. Even as this historic Summit progresses, our peoples face the real threat of being inundated by sea water. In keeping with the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, therefore, Tuvalu urges Member States and the international community at large to take serious heed of the pleas of small island States with regard to climate change, and to combat this threat more aggressively before it is too late. To that end, we also fully support the further promotion of frameworks for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as a means to promote and further ensure the security and survival of our peoples.

In joining the United Nations, Tuvalu could not but notice the extent to which strong champions of democracy and human rights, and those that have genuinely contributed to the development of the prosperity and well-being of the international community, such as the Republic of China, are being excluded from the United Nations. Tuvalu strongly believes that the United Nations cannot be universally representative of the democratic peoples of the world until the question of the representation of the Republic of China in the United Nations is addressed by the General Assembly.

Also of concern to us is the continued suppression of some peoples of the world by colonial means. Tuvalu therefore calls for the conflict in West Papua New Guinea to be properly addressed.

Tuvalu has the greatest hopes that the work of the Millennium Summit and of the General Assembly will lead to constructive reform of the United Nations to make it a more meaningful and representative organization as it moves into the new century. May God bless the United Nations, and may God bless the dreams of its peoples.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Amraiya Naidu, Chairman of the delegation of Fiji.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): It is my profound privilege to deliver the greetings of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Fiji, who deeply regrets not being able to share this momentous occasion of the Millennium Summit with all of us here at the United Nations. His Excellency Ratu Josefa Iloilo is nonetheless with us all in the spirit of this historic occasion to bid farewell to the second millennium and usher in the third millennium and the twenty-first century.

Fiji takes great pride in its membership of the United Nations, and will continue to commit its spirit and resources to the peaceful goals and the principled ideals of this international family. As a sibling of the South Pacific family of nations, Fiji is proud also of the expanding membership of the United Nations community thanks to the admission of its fellow South Pacific nations in recent years.

It is therefore with deep humility and reflection that Fiji takes the floor as the last speaker from the Government delegations, and immediately following Tuvalu, to offer its familial congratulations and embrace to Tuvalu, our sister nation from the Pacific.

Indeed, every family meets with successes and shortcomings at different stages in life. The United

Nations is no different. There is no question that the goals it aspired to 55 years ago have been achieved. There is therefore great cause for celebration today as we come together to close the twentieth century.

The United Nations will be all the richer at the end of this day, with wisdom, commitment, thoughts and ideas expressed as the way forward for the Organization. This day has offered a remarkable opportunity to appraise what has been accomplished, as well as to look for ways to work together towards getting tangible results on issues affecting humankind.

In its achievements, the United Nations is also continually refining its goals through the values and principles that are consolidated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In this process it is also redefining its mandates, structures, processes and resources to meet the rapid global challenges which are far more sophisticated today, and will be in the future, than those faced 55 years ago.

It is this spirit of humble achievement that Fiji intends to bequeath t our future generation with the guidance of a United Nations, well equipped and well resourced to continue to rise to its future challenges.

As family is the bedrock of social and political institutions, it therefore behoves each of us here to ensure that the United Nations remains intact, stronger and robust. Fiji is confident that these goals are attainable through the proposed reforms within the Organization being engineered by the Secretary-General, to whose dynamic leadership Fiji pays particular tribute.

The United Nations family has enabled smaller, least developed or developing countries such as my own to contribute to world peace in our own, albeit small, way. While there have been measurable benefits of United Nations membership, there is also positive scope for much more equitable changes.

My small country has contributed troops and civilian police to United Nations peacekeeping missions for over two decades and has in the process paid the ultimate price of the loss of 35 lives in the maintenance of peace. We have had a presence in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon since that Mission began, and we continue to have a contingent there. Our civilian police are serving in Bosnia and Kosovo. Military observers are in the Iraq-Kuwait Mission, and more recently our troops have been sent to East Timor. Our soldiers in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) are serving with troops from Ireland and New Zealand in Suwai in East Timor, which borders West Timor. We know the area since Wednesday has been far from calm.

Like any member of a family, Fiji has had its share of difficulties and triumphs. It is to the credit of the United Nations that the neighbourly feelings of respect, comradeship and understanding would prevail unimpeded in the halls and corridors of this building, even in times of conflict for its Member States.

The laudable vision of the Secretary-General in the report "We the peoples" is the torch that will guide the United Nations and illuminate its steps for a holistic and collective journey into the twenty-first century. Let us seize this moment. This juncture is ours. Humankind is called on to leave this world better than we found it. Let us pause, look back at things that went wrong and strengthen our resolve to steer for a better future. There is no better time for this task than now, at the crossroads of two millenniums.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Meguid (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delighted to participate in the Millennium Summit. It is a unique, historic event. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. We congratulate him on convening this eminent Assembly, which has brought together the leaders of the world under the auspices of the United Nations, this Organization that personifies the conscience and the aspirations of the world.

The League of Arab States was one of the first regional organizations. It was established in 1945, at the end of the Second World War. The League is entering the third millennium, and it welcomes its greater role in its new partnership with the United Nations. We think this event is of overriding historical importance in international relations. It is an opportunity for the leaders of the world to learn lessons and to benefit from the experience and achievements of the United Nations, as well as its shortcomings, in order to give it a new momentum as we proceed to the next millennium.

Turning to the Organization's future agenda, we need to delineate the objectives more clearly in order to improve United Nations bodies, such as expanding the Security Council membership to make it more democratic and representative of the international community so that the United Nations can become a centre for international policy and international legitimacy. The Organization must abandon selectivity and double standards and must come up with creative solutions in order to preserve international peace and security, ensure respect for human rights, promote democracy, guarantee that there is dialogue among civilizations, combat problems such as disease, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and terrorism and narrow the gap between countries of the North and those of the South. The developing countries should be assisted in attaining economic development, reducing their foreign debt and avoiding the negative effects of globalization.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has achieved enormous successes, including the settlement of various conflicts throughout the world and resolutions adopted to try to resolve the Middle East problem and to restore peace to the region, such as Security Council resolutions 181 (II) of 1947, 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and others.

We believe that the faithful, total implementation of these resolutions is the way to realize just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. This will be brought about through total Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, enabling the Palestinian people to return to their homes, to regain their legitimate rights and to establish their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. It will be brought about by Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967 and by dealing with the effects of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, including the release of Lebanese detainees from Israeli prisons. Israel should also pay compensation for damages done as a result of its occupation of Arab lands.

I would like to pay tribute to the constructive role played by the United Nations in its supervision of the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), regarding Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. We reaffirm the Arab position, which calls for disarmament in the region, particularly nuclear disarmament, to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a region free of all weapons of mass destruction.

The United Nations is the international forum for international legitimacy where efforts are made at regional and world levels to achieve the aspirations of the whole of humankind. The Arab League, which is the expression of Arab aspirations and legitimacy, is keen to solidify and strengthen its links with the United Nations.

In conclusion, I hope that this historic Summit is successful and that it will lead to a future vision and better future for humanity. We also hope that Member States will renew their total commitment to the implementation of the Organization's resolutions and the Charter's provisions.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission.

Mr. Prodi (European Commission): This Summit embodies the commitment of the world's political leaders to strengthen the foundations of the United Nations, to renew it and to reshape it to fit the needs of a new century. It marks a time of hope and a time of expectation to cope with global issues such as fighting poverty, achieving sustainable development and seeking peace, security and human rights for all. We need global solutions based on global cooperation.

The United Nations is uniquely placed to mobilize common action. The Secretary-General's excellent report and his statement prepared for this gathering make that conclusion crystal clear.

As a European, I am aware of how much the map of Europe alone has changed with the end of the cold war and the further development of the European Union. Europeans now have a unique opportunity to create a 500-million-citizen Europe that is truly whole and truly free, the largest community of democracies today. This is a first in recorded history.

Much has changed in other parts of the world, too. Age-old rivalries are being replaced by cooperation. Dictatorships have fallen, to be replaced by democracies. Conflict remains in all too many places, but the march of freedom can be detected around the globe. This is not a prognosis we could have made 20 years ago.

This Summit is taking place at a time of unprecedented hope, but also of unprecedented challenges. An age-old problem that is still with us is the gap between rich and poor countries, or between the haves and the have-nots. This is unjust and unsustainable. It is an affront to decency and a threat to our stability.

The challenges of globalization are, by contrast, entirely new. How do we cope with these challenges? I see globalization as a new opportunity to be exploited. This is why I would welcome a new round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), based on four key principles: liberalization, including better market access for developing countries; stronger and updated rules; sustainable development; and the need to respond to the concerns expressed by civil society. A new trade round would help give people a share in the benefits of globalization, bridging the world divide. Clearly, the WTO cannot achieve this goal by itself. Other parts of the multilateral system, especially those responsible for social and empowerment issues, also need to be strengthened.

At this time of great expectation, the emergence of a genuine world economy, underpinned by colossal technology forces, calls for a vastly improved system of global governance — that is, a common core of values, rules and practices to which we all subscribe.

In the international arena, there is no alternative to democracy. In the international arena, there is no alternative to strong, multilateral institutions based on impeccable democratic legitimacy. Decisions and procedures must be transparent. Civil society must be more directly involved. Only improved multilateralism will ensure that globalization appears not so much as a threat, but rather as an opportunity not to be missed.

The old "trade not aid" slogan does not adequately reflect the challenges of our time. We certainly need more open trade, but we must also improve financial flows to developing countries and strengthen our aid commitments. Without targeted aid, the workings of the global economy would be difficult to reconcile with the expectations of the poor. It is no accident that the European Union and its member States have been operating a wide-ranging programme of external assistance for years, representing more than half of all official development assistance worldwide, and some two thirds of all grant aid. This is the result of a deeply felt moral commitment to solidarity.

In the demanding circumstances of the new century, the fight against poverty needs a change in approach. The European Union contribution has come in the form of the new Cotonou Agreement, governing its relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

A daunting amount still remains to be done, and collaboration is the key to success. The European Union is committed to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, to which the European Community is the largest single contributor in the world. In Brussels in May next year it will be hosting the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The socio-economic development of the South remains vital to our own stability and prosperity. Social development goes hand in hand with human rights. The new century should build upon the results of our generation's struggle in this field.

In its efforts to enhance respect for human rights, the European Union has been working to promote the abolition of the death penalty and has called for a moratorium on execution. The United Nations can play a major role in facilitating developments in this regard.

I hope that the beacon lit at the Summit will illuminate the work of a new United Nations, placed on a firmer and more financially equitable footing, a United Nations for the twenty-first century. The European Community is fully aware of the challenges facing this Organization, and it stands ready to play its part in meeting them.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Laraki (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*spoke in Arabic*): I bring the Assembly greetings from the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and its best wishes and prayers for the success of this historic gathering of heads of State and Government, perhaps the largest of its kind ever held on this planet.

This is a momentous event. The atmosphere here is overwhelming, signifying the seriousness with which the heads of State or Government of the countries of the world view the opportunity to unite in the common cause of peace and prosperity, to be collectively

pursued by each and every one of us in the new millennium ahead.

We have entered the twenty-first century with great expectations, but also with some daunting constraints. In the century that has just gone by, mankind vigorously and successfully explored the environment and made considerable progress in uncovering, through acquired scientific knowledge and technological skills, some of the keys to alleviating many of human society's social and material constraints and problems. The challenge now is to use the acquired knowledge and skills in a manner that would serve the interests of and cater to the needs of all humankind so that no one remains deprived of — indeed, so that everyone may benefit from — the resources with which our Creator has enriched the earth.

The notion of dialogue among civilizations, introduced by Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Chairman of the Islamic Summit Conference, and adopted by the General Assembly, if pursued constructively and in the spirit of mutual respect, should take us a long way towards attaining the lofty objectives of peace and prosperity for all. I express the hope that the year of dialogue, to be proclaimed in 2001, may usher in an era of mutual understanding, healthy and fruitful contacts and the sharing of knowledge and skills and know-how on all fronts of human needs and endeavours, so that we may attain our worthwhile development goals, especially poverty alleviation, social integration, full employment and education and health care for all.

This leads me to the idea of globalization, and to address some misgivings, misunderstandings and reservations with which it is being viewed in certain quarters, particularly in the third world. I share the view of Mr. Kofi Annan that we must make globalization an engine that lifts people out of hardship and misery, not a force that holds them down. We must carefully and meticulously ensure that globalization promotes equity, guarantees equality of opportunity, enforces transparency and fosters confidence and mutual respect in all dealings among the peoples and nations of the world.

To attain that goal, it is imperative, indeed, essential, for an environment of freedom and justice to prevail for all peoples and nations of the world. Every human being deserves to breathe the air of freedom and to be empowered to exercise his or her role in constructive developmental undertakings for the benefit of society as a whole.

This also calls for the end of foreign occupation, and the exercise of the right of self-determination, wherever people remain deprived of it — I refer particularly to the rights of self-determination of the peoples of Palestine and of Kashmir. As long as they, and any others in a similar situation, remain in bondage, humankind as a whole remains in a state of shame. It is incumbent upon the United Nations to help redeem those members of human society from their long-lasting predicaments so that they may regain their dignity and self-respect and join forces with the rest of us as free and equal partners in the developmental tasks that lie ahead.

At a time when our world is at the crossroads of trends and events that either threaten mass destruction or promise a just and progressive future, let us not lose the precious opportunity offered by this Millennium Summit today. Let this be remembered as the time when the leadership of the world rose to the occasion and, using all its God-given wisdom, laid down the foundations of a healthy, safe and progressive global village to be our collective destiny in the new millennium. To that end, I pledge most solemnly the full cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Mr. McKinnon (Commonwealth Secretariat) It is an honour for me, as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, to make this statement to this very important Millennium Summit.

Allow me to join others in conveying our warmest congratulations to Tuvalu, the newest Member, which equally became a full member of the Commonwealth on 1 September.

Since 1946, the platform here has given hundreds of world leaders the opportunity to declare their concerns, their needs, their wants, their aspirations and, of course, their despair. The same people have spoken of visions of hope and about excitement about what this great Organization could do, of what regions, the great Powers and, of course, small States could do.

But it would be rather hard today to find a person amongst the 1.2 billion who live on less than $1 a day who would say that this Organization should be garlanded for its success.

I do, however, pay a tribute to the tens of thousands of United Nations staff around the world that do their very best to deliver on the mandates that are agreed to here. That the people are committed to this Organization there can be no doubt. The recent death of United Nations workers in Timor is very much a testament to that. But success by the United Nations must begin with clear, unambiguous and workable political decisions.

We in the Commonwealth, a grouping of some 54 nations comprising 1.5 billion people, also want to make things better for those living in poverty, those who do not know peace, people who do not know where tomorrow's food is coming from, those who have no permanent place to live, those who cannot contemplate education for their children, those who watch family friends die without health care and can only depend on immediate family for their old age. And, in today's world of the digital divide, that gap widens even more.

When one can travel to the other side of the globe in 24 hours, when one can move billions of pictures, of words, of dollars around the world in seconds, no one lives very far away from anyone any more, and everybody is our neighbour.

The global neighbourhood means that we all have an interest in helping our neighbour. It is costly for us to have neighbours who are unwell, uneducated or unable to work, because ultimately the costs of rescuing them climb even higher and the costs become ours to meet.

In the Commonwealth we are not able to tackle all these problems, but we do believe that they must be addressed. We will continue to uphold and pursue those basic entitlements of all people.

Essential is, of course, the freedom to choose who should govern one. Equally, only those Governments with a high level of probity that support sound, democratic institutions, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, and that provide rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of race, gender, colour, creed or political belief, will truly be able to deliver to their people that which their people are entitled to expect.

Our enshrined Commonwealth values require members to uphold these principles. And our commitment is exemplified by the fact that two of our members are currently suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth because democratically elected Governments have been overthrown. I am pleased that the leaders of the Organization of African Unity have also decided to make unwelcome those leaders who come to power using a loaded gun.

There is a challenge, of course, to the United Nations to make unwelcome those in this institution who also use a gun to overthrow a Parliament or a Government elected by the people. In the Commonwealth we will continue to work hard to encourage the practice of good governance. It may not, by itself, put food on the table or educate a teenager, but it is fundamental to a society that wishes to progress.

We will continue to run programmes to better educate, train and qualify people. We will continue to play our part in conflict resolution, encouraging trade expansion, and fighting communicable diseases.

There are many times that we cannot go it alone, and we shall continue to work with the United Nations and other agencies, with development banks, regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

We believe that we must work together in this new millennium to better this world. If we work with others, all moving in the same direction, with similar goals and objectives, and with less discord amongst each other, we will improve on the last century.

If we can convince ourselves that the malnourished child in a war-torn State is more important than who sits on what committee in this institution, I believe we will have some success, and the United Nations will get the praise we believe it deserves.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdolrahim Govahi, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Mr. Govahi (Economic Cooperation Organization): At the outset, on behalf of the

delegation of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I express our gratitude to the United Nations Secretariat for the opportunity to deliver my statement at this Summit.

The ECO region comprises a land mass of over 7 million square kilometres, inhabited by more than 300 million people who are bound together by deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, and represents enormous human and resource potential. Its seat located in Tehran, ECO is purely an economic organization seeking to promote multi-dimensional regional cooperation for the accelerated socio-economic well-being of its member States. It comprises 10 members. These are, besides Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, six independent republics of the former Soviet Union: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Having been granted observer status during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, we find that our joint endeavours with various United Nations specialized agencies and programmes over the past few years have contributed significantly in promoting the objective of the all-round socio-economic development of the ECO region. In the past decade ECO has signed memoranda of understanding with more than a dozen United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and has since carried out joint missions, projects and activities with them in order to serve our common objectives vis-à-vis this region. ECO has also been granted observer status at the World Trade Organization since March 1999. Outside the United Nations system, we have mutually beneficial close contacts with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union, the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the South Asian regional organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The Tehran Declaration, issued at the dawn of the new millennium by our leaders on the occasion of their sixth summit, reaffirms our collective commitment to a prosperous ECO region. It addresses all important issues of our concern in the priority areas of trade, transport and communications, energy, the environment, health, drug control, etc. The Declaration, inter alia, welcomes the initiative, globally received and acknowledged by the whole world, of His Excellency Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, of a "Dialogue among Civilizations", for which the United Nations has designated 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

In conclusion, I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and the United Nations Headquarters staff for making excellent arrangements for this auspicious Summit. Coinciding as it does with the advent of the new millennium, we wish it every success.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Kellenberger (International Committee of the Red Cross): I thank you, Madam, for giving me the opportunity to address the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.

With a staff of almost 12,000, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is active in practically all armed conflicts and most situations of international strife that could degenerate into an armed conflict. Its task is to protect and assist the victims. From such a vantage point, the ICRC is unfortunately witnessing disturbing trends in a growing number of conflicts. The number of helpless civilian victims, mainly women and children, is steadily increasing. The civilian population has become the very target in many conflicts. Meeting the particular needs of women and girls for protection and assistance will be a priority for the ICRC in coming years.

International humanitarian law is regularly being flouted in an environment with an increasing number of identity-related and destructured conflicts in eroding State structures. In addition, new perpetrators of violence are emerging, sometimes difficult to identify and to get in touch with. Access to cheap and increasingly sophisticated weaponry is easy, and is further facilitated by today's communication networks. This accessibility and the erosion of State power are the ingredients of many conflict situations. I thank the Secretary-General for having underlined, in his report

to the General Assembly, that the issue of the proliferation of light weapons must be urgently addressed.

There is a correlation between extreme poverty and violence. The eradication of extreme poverty clearly has a conflict-prevention dimension. There are dangers inherent in humanitarian action, of which we have been sadly reminded this week by the killing, in West Timor, of colleagues from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. What more must happen for more concrete action to be taken in order to better protect solidly motivated and courageous relief workers? Lastly, with a growing number of actors in the field, humanitarian activities often suffer from a lack of coordination, imprecise mandates and vague principles of action.

An extensive body of international law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, sets out rules aimed at alleviating the suffering engendered by international and non-international armed conflicts. The High Contracting Parties to the fourth Geneva Convention have undertaken to respect and to ensure respect for the Conventions in all circumstances. More significant steps have to be taken in order to better ensure this respect. The ICRC offers advice and technical expertise to Governments. Together with its partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the national societies and their Federation, the ICRC will pursue its dissemination of international humanitarian law and do its utmost to ensure respect for it. It also strives to assure that the rules of humanitarian law governing weapons are updated to take into account the rapid development of new military technology.

The efforts of the United Nations in helping develop and promote international humanitarian law, and in particular the steps taken to afford better protection to civilians in armed conflicts, are greatly appreciated by the ICRC. Better implementation of existing humanitarian law remains one of my main concerns. A plan of action to improve implementation is part of the ICRC's institutional priorities.

Today's — and no doubt tomorrow's — humanitarian challenges cannot be met without a strong commitment to improved coordination between humanitarian actors. The ICRC is committed to efficient coordination. "Efficient" means that such coordination should amount to better protection and assistance to victims. This implies that each actor concentrates on his core competencies as practically exercised in the field. The ICRC cooperates with United Nations-led coordination mechanisms. As such, it discusses humanitarian issues and shares information, both in the field and by means of bilateral, high-level dialogue. There is no contradiction between the ICRC's commitment to coordination and the equally strong commitment to the independence of its strictly humanitarian action, based on the principles of impartiality and neutrality. The credibility of the ICRC as an independent and neutral intermediary in situations of armed conflict, seeking to obtain access to all victims, is certainly in the interest of all: the community of States and, above all, the victims of armed conflict themselves.

At the dawn of a new century, the Assembly can count on an ICRC willing to fulfil its humanitarian tasks through concrete action in the field wherever there is a need for protection and assistance. My strong hope — indeed, my expectation — is that the community of States will invest more in the prevention of armed conflicts and, should a conflict erupt despite all efforts, make it clear to all the parties involved that they are expected to respect the rules of international humanitarian law.

The strong, political support given to the United Nations by the Millennium Summit is also encouraging for the ICRC, because it means support for policies aimed at better protection for the most vulnerable in this world.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency, Count Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Count Marullo di Condojanni: (Sovereign Military Order of Malta) (*spoke in French*): The Millennium Summit represents an opportunity to consider the real evolutionary prospects with respects to the programmes presented by the international community concerning the many problems facing the peoples of the world today, for which it is difficult to find adequate solutions.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the lofty moral message of his report, and we would very humbly like to remind the heads of State or

Government gathered here of some priorities, in the belief that when they return home, they will, as the Secretary-General said, do their utmost and all that is within their power in order to diminish differences and make up for omissions, particularly at this stage in the history of humankind in when the globalization of markets, unless properly governed, may worsen existing imbalances, thereby making the rich countries richer and the poor ones poorer.

Much will depend on how well we apply the new technologies to agriculture. These technologies must not become a new goldmine to be exploited by the few rich and powerful countries; on the contrary, they must be placed at the service of humanity, while at the same time we respect the fundamental laws of nature so that we do not destablize ecosystems.

These new technologies must be harnessed towards harmonious and controlled development, assuring the poorer countries easier access to production systems. This may improve, if not solve, an age-old and chronic problem that has become intolerable to all those who care about the future of mankind.

While we look forward with great hope to projects aimed at alleviating hunger in the world and at enhancing the quality of life by providing, at the least, sufficient food and medicine, we must not neglect, in addition to issues of basic survival, the spiritual development of man from an intellectual point of view, and therefore the right to education from a social point of view and the end of all discrimination from the point of view of the right to life with the necessary assurances, as well as respect for justice in the broadest meaning of this word.

This is one of the purposes for which the United Nations was established, which expressly include the enhancement of behaviours complying with the principles of justice.

In a world approaching the third millennium, the so-called civilized countries are unfortunately often late in providing people with effective justice. They openly declare formal adherence to the charter of human rights, but then trample on such rights whenever they fail to provide speedy trials and whenever they allow the use of unlimited pre-trial detention in criminal cases and, worse still, do not respect the individual right to an effective defence vis-à-vis the often excessive power granted to the prosecution. This breaches the primary rule that should govern criminal trials: the absolute equality of defence and prosecution before an truly impartial judge.

Accordingly, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta firmly reaffirms its full response to the Secretary-General's invitations to all nations

> "to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, so as to consolidate and extend the gains we have achieved in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity". (*A/54/2000, para. 330*)

Much more could be said on this subject, but that would require additional time. We hope, however, that the Millennium Summit may, by heeding the call of the Secretary-General, effectively stimulate better forms of international cooperation among States in order to deal with emergencies throughout the world and to increase legitimate universal control, which is now required by the global perspective in which the international community has been operating for some years.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Najma Heptulla, President of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments.

Ms. Heptulla (Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments): I am honoured to take the floor as the President of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments and on behalf of the oldest international organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), to present the outcome of the unique and historically compelling event held in this Hall from 30 August to 1 September, in cooperation with the United Nations and with the participation of some 148 Presidents of chambers from 140 countries. This first ever Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments truly represents the commitment of representatives of the peoples, the Parliaments, to work ever more closely, together with the United Nations, to ensure that the twenty-first century is a century without fear, without deprivation and want, a century that allows for the fullest development of the inherent potential of each and every human being that will represent the real globalization.

We thank the Secretary-General for his very inspiring address on that occasion. His messages will be reciprocated through our actions.

After intensive debate, we unanimously adopted a declaration encapsulating our parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium. It sets out the main challenges facing our societies and expresses our political resolve to successfully overcome them through international cooperation. It also contains recommendations on the role of parliaments in a reformed multilateral cooperation system.

Parliaments stand firmly behind the United Nations and this support is both political and practical. Whether we belong to the majority or to the opposition in our parliaments, we are committed to offering the necessary political backing to the United Nations as the cornerstone of the international cooperation system. We are also committed to allocating the resources which the United Nations and the other intergovernmental institutions need to accomplish their noble mission.

We are unanimous in identifying a democratic deficit in the United Nations and the intergovernmental regime at large. If the United Nations decisions are to interpret the concerns and aspirations of the peoples and if international agreements are to effectively find their way to our national reality, parliament, as the institution which legitimately represents society in its diversity and is accountable to it, should have a better say in the international cooperation process.

No doubt it is for Governments to negotiate at the United Nations. Surely, our main role as legislators is to translate into legislative and budgetary provisions the agreements reached internationally by them. Yet it is in the wider interest of all, and certainly in the interest of democracy, that we be involved in the process in its early stages and not exclusively in the implementation phase. Intergovernmental organizations would also become more accountable and would be perceived as more transparent by the people if we were better informed about and associated with their action as people's representatives. We are happy to note that the millennium declaration that this gathering will adopt calls for a strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which I have the honour to represent here. I and my colleagues will do all that is in our power, and attempt much that is beyond, to give concrete shape to the Assembly's call.

We are determined to see to it that the necessary work is done at the national level, and especially within our national parliaments, so that action can be taken to develop the parliamentary dimension of the international cooperation for which we are calling. To create this new partnership, parliaments intend to act in close consultation with Governments and with the intergovernmental organizations.

Internationally, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is a unique instrument to relay the views of our parliaments to the intergovernmental system. This is why we can no longer accept that it be classified as a non-governmental organization and we look forward to identifying with the Assembly a status for the IPU which is commensurate with the constitutional status of parliaments and with IPU's mission as our world organization.

We were concerned that two of our fellow presiding officers were prevented from participating. The denial of visas to them runs counter to the spirit on which the IPU and the United Nations are founded and is contrary to the principles of democracy underlying the functioning of parliaments. Furthermore, it calls into question our ability to meet at the United Nations in New York to express the kind of support with which we want to provide it. I therefore call on all representatives and the host country urgently to help us find a solution to such problems.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Techeste Ahderom, Co-Chairperson of the Millennium Forum.

Mr. Ahderom (Co-Chair of the Millennium Forum): Last May, representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations from all over the world gathered in this great hall to consult about humanity's common future and, in particular, about the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

The meeting was called the Millennium Forum, and, in light of the wide ranging concerns of its participants, the geographic reach they embodied — including broad representation from developing countries — and the depth and breath of the organizations they represented, it was one of the most diverse — and significant — gatherings of civil society organizations ever held.

The Forum was significant for its attempt to accelerate the process among non-governmental

organizations of networking and coalition building across issue areas that has proved to be such a powerful force for change and social action in today's world. The issues we considered included how to establish a just and lasting peace; how to eradicate poverty; how to set humanity on a path of sustainable development while protecting our shared environment; how to see that human rights everywhere are upheld, at all times, by all nations; and how to face up to the urgent challenges of globalization.

In the end, despite our great diversity, we successfully agreed on a powerfully worded "Declaration and Agenda for Action". It offers a bold vision for humanity's future and outlines a series of concrete steps that the United Nations, governments, and members of civil society themselves can take to address the global problems facing humanity today.

After hearing your speeches here over the last three days, I must say that our vision and plan of action are consonant with much of what has been said here. I am personally heartened by this and feel that this historic Summit may well be remembered as having opened the door to a long-awaited era of peace, justice and prosperity for all humanity. This new era will, of course, require concrete deeds and not just words.

We in civil society stand ready to work with you and your governments, side by side, in a strong new partnership to create this new world. At the same time, civil society also stands ready to hold you to your commitments if you do not deliver on your words. Throughout history, from the abolition of slavery to the recognition of the equality of women and men, most great social movements have begun not with governments but with ordinary people.

In 1945, civil society played an important role in shaping many of the key articles found in the Charter of the United Nations, especially in the area of human rights.

More recently, non-governmental organizations have played a leading role in shaping and supporting an International Criminal Court, in the movement for debt cancellation, and in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

On a number of occasions, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said that civil society participation in and partnership with the United Nations is not an option, but a necessity.

We appreciate his efforts to facilitate effective partnership with civil society at the United Nations. We thank him especially for opening the United Nations to the Millennium Forum last May, and for making the Millennium Forum Declaration available to this Summit as a United Nations document.

We ask that you review carefully our Millennium Forum Declaration. I think you will find that, for the most part, we are simply calling on Governments to live up to the commitments and the principles that they agreed to in the great global conferences of the 1990s. We are also seeking increased access for non-governmental organizations to the United Nations General Assembly and its Main Committees.

Allow me to give you a few highlights of what the Forum called for in its Declaration.

The Forum's participants believe that, when a billion people go to bed hungry every night, it is a gross violation of human rights. The Declaration calls for immediate debt cancellation. It also calls for a "Global Poverty Eradication Fund", aimed at offering the poor access to credit.

On globalization, the Forum took the view that, while it offers "significant opportunities for people to connect, share and learn from each other", in its currently unregulated form it increases inequities and escalates disparities between rich and poor, undermines local traditions and cultures, and it marginalizes large numbers of people in urban and rural areas.

The Declaration urges Governments to make serious "commitments to restructure the global financial architecture based on principles of equity, transparency, accountability, and democracy ...." stating clearly that the United Nations should be the pre-eminent international organization overseeing the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

To conclude, the Millennium Forum Declaration seeks to articulate the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world. As its opening paragraphs state:

> "Our vision is of a world that is human-centred and genuinely democratic, where all human beings are full participants and determine their own destinies. In our vision we are one human family, in all our diversity, living on one common homeland and sharing a just, sustainable and peaceful world, guided by universal

principles of democracy, equality, inclusion, voluntarism, non-discrimination and participation by all persons ...".

Oral presentations by the Chairpersons of the four round tables

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): We shall now hear oral presentations by the Chairpersons of the four round tables.

I give the floor to the Chairman of the round table held on Wednesday 6 September from 3 to 6 p.m., His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. Goh (Singapore): I shall summarize the discussion for the round table I chaired. At the outset, I told my fellow leaders that I would divide the time equally among the subjects of globalization, peace and security, and any other issues. As it turned out, the discussion focused on globalization. However, there were a few interventions on peace and security, Security Council reform, and environmental issues.

Let me first provide an overview of the concerns of the participants on globalization. There was no obvious North-South divide among the participants. All the leaders felt that globalization was a reality that had to be faced. There were enormous benefits for those who could take advantage of globalization. Others who lacked the capacity to do so, however, would find themselves falling further and further behind in the economic race. The negative effects of globalization have therefore to be moderated so that they will not strip away the small and the weak. One key point was that, while individual countries had national institutions to regulate the domestic market and moderate its social impact, there were no international institutions to regulate the global market and check the adverse effects of globalization on countries.

On the "digital divide", many leaders felt that bridging it would help close the widening income gulf. Others were of the view that they needed first to deal with more fundamental problems, such as lack of basic education and reliable electricity and water supplies. Several leaders argued that the rules of the international financial institutions were written to favour strong, rich countries. Undemocratic decision-making at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) was cited. Many said that a basic problem impeding their country's development was their debt burden and urged debt relief.

The leaders offered several solutions to the problems they had identified. Some mentioned the importance of development assistance in capacity-building so that countries could benefit from globalization. The United Nations could, for instance, give training in how to negotiate and take advantage of trade agreements. Members have to give the United Nations the resources to run such programmes. They should, first and foremost, show their political will and sincerity in wanting to help the poorer countries by paying their dues to the United Nations.

To raise resources, one suggestion was an international tax or some other fiscal measure. This could help in finding a solution to the problems created by globalization. Another proposal was to create an economic security council within the United Nations, with the same binding authority as the political Security Council. This economic security council would monitor the global market and make recommendations to deal with economic developments that threatened the security of countries. An international anti-trust law to combat price-fixing and the abuse of power by monopolies, cartels and large companies was also suggested.

Some leaders expressed the view that the decision-making procedures of the WTO, IMF and World Bank should be made more democratic, consultative, inclusive and transparent, like the United Nations General Assembly. The decisions of the World Bank and the IMF should take into account the different social and economic needs of various countries.

There was discussion on whether new institutions should be created to deal with the new challenges of this era, or old ones reformed. Some participants cautioned that it would be hard to find resources for new institutions, as the cost of participating in existing institutions such as the WTO was already a great burden for small countries. In any case, the real problem was that strong countries could manipulate existing institutions for their own advantage, and that it was pointless to establish new institutions unless the decision-making process itself was made more democratic.

The question was asked as to how we would follow up on the round-table discussion. One proposal

was to use the Millennium Declaration as a plan of action to be implemented and monitored at both the national and United Nations levels.

Let me end this summary with my personal observation. I believe that the round-table experiment was a success. A round table for leaders deserves to be institutionalized. Since the United Nations was founded, leaders have been coming to the United Nations to give their views on global issues on a single track, that is, through speeches in the plenary. Until this round table, the United Nations process had never provided for an interactive dialogue among leaders. I would strongly recommend that the United Nations build on this week's experience.

I suggest that we build into the United Nations process a round table for leaders every few years to allow interactive discussion among leaders in an informal setting, away from aides, officials and prepared scripts. This week's round table has shown that such a format can give rise to fresh, useful and innovative ideas. An interactive round table would also foster closer friendship and understanding between leaders and hence warmer relations between nations. We should not wait for 1,000 years to have the next round table.

Thank you for giving Singapore the honour to chair one of the four round tables.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I give the floor to the Chairman of the round table held yesterday morning, His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of the Republic of Poland.

President Kwaśniewski: Yesterday I had the pleasure to preside over the debate in the second round table of this Millennium Summit. I wish to report today that we indeed had a fascinating — and I underline "fascinating" — exchange of views. More than 30 leaders took part in the debate. We tried to identify problems, find solutions and define the role of the United Nations.

My conclusion from the debate is that we seem to share the same view concerning the nature of the challenges facing the world in the twenty-first century. These are, among others, security risks and local conflicts, poverty, development gaps, endemic illnesses and environmental hazards. Of course, it is much more difficult to find mutually agreed solutions to these challenges. However, the discussion yesterday offered some new ideas and new approaches. What is even more important, there was among us a common agreement that the United Nations should play a crucial role in defining the right answers to these problems and in implementing them.

My feeling is, after having listened to my colleagues, that the main challenge ahead of us is the question of development and of the equal distribution of the benefits resulting from globalization. Many countries are faced with tremendous developmental problems as the gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to increase. It was broadly agreed that, while globalization provided unprecedented opportunities, including in trade and technological development, the benefits of globalization should be more evenly and universally spread. Technology offers a great chance, but first we have to satisfy the fundamental needs of peoples, including food, health and education.

Globalization should become human and better managed. At the institutional level, it means reforms of the international financial and trading system that would make them more equitable. A win-win globalization has to address the risks posed by the new "digital divide". Negative aspects such as drug-trafficking, money-laundering, the illicit arms trade and transnational crime need to be addressed as well.

Concern was also expressed about the rise in oil prices and its consequences for development.

The process of globalization has to be based on moral principles and values. The most important among them is solidarity. At the global level, that principle has to be translated first and foremost into solidarity with Africa. A strong plea was made to recognize the special circumstances of that continent and for the international community to undertake a concerted effort to address the plight the continent faces: poverty, conflicts, HIV/AIDS and so on.

A new partnership for Africa was called for. That "new deal" would require a fundamental change of attitude, which should be based on independent thinking and active participation by Africans themselves, on a non-parochial, forthcoming and comprehensive approach by their partners, on a rejection of a welfare approach and on an emphasis on the root causes of the problems.

The most pressing challenge, most participants seemed to agree, is the question of fighting poverty. Poverty is the most extreme form of abuse of human dignity. It is often the root cause of instability, conflicts, social tensions and environmental threats. Several participants stressed the need to elaborate workable mechanisms at all levels — global, regional and local — to alleviate poverty and close the gap between rich and poor, and to intensify international cooperation towards that goal. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. It was mentioned that a coordinated United Nations global action plan for poverty eradication should be elaborated.

Among the priorities for action, participants mentioned also debt relief, as well as the need to increase official development assistance. The debt burden continues to be a major impediment to development. It was suggested that some means to mediate between creditors and debtors might be helpful to better meet the needs and interests of both sides. Debt reduction for the poorest nations will enable them to address the most acute problems of social development. To borrow a phrase used by one of the participants, we have finally to move from words to deeds.

Grave concern was expressed over HIV/AIDS, malaria and other pandemic diseases. These are considered to be a major threat to the achievement of development goals. To control these diseases, access to treatment and medical drugs at affordable prices should be assured, particularly for developing countries. There was a call to launch global programmes with the participation of all stakeholders, including the United Nations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and the pharmaceutical industry. In that regard, there was widespread support for the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report.

The importance of investing in education and the promotion of the rights of children and youth were also stressed.

Many participants underlined that stable development is not possible without effective protection of human rights and strong democracy. The conditions for democracy needed to be addressed in both developed and developing countries. In established democracies, increasingly low voter turnout as well as racist and xenophobic movements tend to threaten democratic norms and values.

The leaders stressed the link between poverty alleviation and environmental protection. It was emphasized that environment should be placed high on the global agenda. Ratification of legally binding international instruments such as the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was also called for. As one of the participants observed, environmental considerations can be a driving force in the economy, and new, environmentally sound technologies can provide an important vehicle for growth.

Ensuring security, preventing deadly conflicts and maintaining peace are still among the priority tasks of the United Nations. There is an urgent need to adapt peacekeeping operations to the new circumstances, and to pay increased attention to conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-building. If the capacity of the United Nations quickly to deploy robust operations is not strengthened, if Member States fail to provide on time the necessary resources and personnel and if the Organization fails to improve the planning and management of these operations, the United Nations might lose its credibility. There was widespread support for the Brahimi report and for its concrete recommendations.

Good-neighbourly relations and regional cooperation were also seen as a key to ensuring security.

The call for reform of the Security Council was reiterated.

Individual identification of those who commit war crimes and other crimes against humanity is important to avoid collective stigmatization and guilt. Support was expressed for the early establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Some participants pointed out the need to assess critically the instrument of sanctions.

There was a commonly shared view that the United Nations must be strengthened and that it must adapt to the changing international environment. The Organization was seen as an important vehicle to manage globalization. Several participants drew attention to the need to ensure democracy in international relations, and hence coherence and

coordination among international organizations, both at the global and the regional levels, was called for.

Some participants suggested considering the establishment of new institutions to deal with problems of globalization. The idea of an economic security council was mentioned.

All in all, the discussion left me with an optimistic impression. I detected a wide-ranging meeting of minds and a determination to amplify our efforts to bring about change. This Summit is about change, and it was stressed that we should seize this opportunity to translate into action what has been agreed in principle. Implementation is not only a job for the Secretary-General, but is first and foremost the obligation of Member States.

There was agreement that the round table served as a useful forum for an exchange of views. We all seemed to enjoy this innovative form of more direct and informal discussion. I believe that many of us would welcome this format being followed more frequently at the United Nations in future.

I spent almost four hours with my colleagues and friends during the discussion, and it was one of the most impressive exchanges and meetings of minds in which I, as a fairly experienced politician, have participated.

We should continue this job. The main message I want to offer is that we have a good future in front of us. We should support the United Nations in all its efforts. We should support the Secretary-General in his efforts. I think we have enough power, we have enough determination to do it.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I now give the floor to the Chairman of the round table held yesterday afternoon, His Excellency Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

President Chávez Frías (*spoke in Spanish*): I had an outstanding experience coordinating and assisting in a very diverse round table with heads of State, representatives of Governments of America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania. As our good friend, the President of Poland, Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, was saying, we spent about four hours there, and the first thing I am going to say is that I am going to make a major effort in these first few minutes to reflect the spirit that prevailed and to stand in solidarity with the spirit and the creativity that was brought to bear.

I think that is one of the recommendations I bring on behalf of my colleagues of round table number 3. We agreed at all the round tables that we must continue to give impetus to this experience that is just beginning. These round tables should be ongoing and held frequently; they should be interactive and creative because creativity emerges from that whirlwind of ideas. We must maintain the informal nature of these round tables so that we do not have written statements. They are fine, of course, but we should leave everything that occurs there open to spontaneity and creativity.

This is also vital to the effort we must make in the years to come to seek and attain the truth or the truths of today and be able to truly begin to transform the world. This is essential. That is the first recommendation: Continuity, frequency and the institutionalization of the round tables. This is a way of reclaiming the ethical nature of participation, of restoring the ethical character of the dialogue and the creativity.

My colleagues and I agree on one question based on the deliberations we are witnessing here and on the excellent report submitted by the Secretary-General to guide us at this Millennium Summit. How can the goals determined there be met? For example, reducing poverty by half by 2015; ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls receive a complete education of good quality. How can this be achieved and not allowed simply to remain goals on paper?

Perhaps some of the suggestions and recommendations I am going to present could try to answer that question. How can that be achieved? First, we agree with round table number 1, as was related by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, that the establishment of an independent development council is necessary. However, it must have the same weight as the Security Council. It should not be an advisory or expert group. We will need that, of course. But we need a real council that takes decisions to confront the enormous challenge of reducing poverty levels and raising living standards, particularly of the poorest and most backward countries.

One of the many great Secretary-Generals of the United Nations said on one occasion: the United Nations has not been created to take our peoples to

heaven, but to save us from hell. There are many peoples at the gates of hell. It is not just because of bombs and bombers, but because of hunger, poverty and marginalization. So we propose the establishment of a development council in the United Nations in an institutional manner, with great authority and strong decision-making powers. It has to be representative and democratic.

Secondly, we must institutionalize and reinforce the regional groups. They must meet. We must meet at the regional level so that we can frequently table recommendations and offer avenues to resolve so many tragedies within the existing United Nations bodies, which truly need a lot of dynamism.

Thirdly, we also agree with almost all the round tables in that we consider it an urgent matter to reactivate the South-South dialogue and re-establish a North-South dialogue that will be frank, so that we can all seek solutions to the many problems.

Because I am a spokesman for all my colleagues, I also wish to emphasize that we do not want this to remain words alone. We are demanding, with this 2000 Millennium Summit, that we truly begin to make changes now, not 50 years from now or at another millennium summit — the 3000 Millennium Summit. We want it now. Our peoples demand this now.

Fourthly, I am going to borrow a phrase from one of my colleagues of round table number 3, who said that we cannot continue navigating through the new century with the map we had in 1945. One colleague even said that his country had not participated in the Second World War, which has been cited as part of the criteria to be a member of the Security Council. Well, he and the majority of us, including Venezuela, fortunately did not participate in the Second World War. The important thing is that we that we make and share the map for 2000 with other criteria. Round table number 3 by general consensus and very vigorously — there were many passionate interactive statements — proposes that democratization of the Security Council be faced and achieved. But it must be done because if it is not, many said we could lose the credibility of the message and the debate on democracy and equality, which is spoken of frequently in these forums. This is so necessary in order to effect change in the world.

Do away with the veto in the Security Council — there was absolute consensus on that in round table number 3. That is what we are calling for. But I think we have to truly be heard and we must have a real response.

I said this at the round table in one of my statements and, believe me, I am going to say here before members with the greatest respect: if we are not heard, if a year were to pass, if two years were to pass, if five years were to pass, and nothing happened here, and if heads of State and Government who represent millions of people were not convened, then I think we would need to attend another summit.

I am sure that is not going to happen. I am sure we will be heard, because we are optimistic as we move forward into the new world and the new century. We are certain that people are going to pay attention to us. We speak for millions of people, not for ourselves alone. We clamour to be heard, now, once and for all.

In closing, I wish to say that the United Nations Charter begins with a beautiful expression of democracy. It does not say "We the heads of State". Nor does it say "We the heads of Government". But it begins with a beautiful phrase: "We the peoples". Let us recover that.

Let us consult our peoples. Let us inform our peoples about what was discussed here, about the conclusions that were drawn in this Summit and about the concerns that were expressed here. There is a challenge before us, but I do not believe it impossible or utopian to establish channels for the participation of peoples at the world level.

How can this be done? That is one of the challenges facing the United Nations — to inform and to receive criticism and input from our peoples. It seems to me that it is much easier today than yesterday, because we have had so much technological progress.

Finally, to underscore the importance of hearing our peoples — because I believe this, and in Venezuela we have proved it — peoples know which way to go. Peoples have their own wisdom. The experience of centuries, of the many paths that have been taken, has given wisdom to our peoples. Let us listen to them. Let them speak. Bolivar, our liberator, used to say: "I believe more in the counsel of the people than in the counsel of the wise men". And I think we find it in the ideas of Christianity — the voice of the people is the voice of God. Let us hear the voice of God through the voices of the peoples. I am certain that in the years to come we will find better paths for our world.

I embrace you all most warmly, and I congratulate you heartily.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I give the floor to the Chairman of the round table held this morning, His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

President Bouteflika (*spoke in French*): This Millennium Summit is an exceptional event. The fourth round table was an excellent opportunity for us to exchange views on three crucial issues: globalization, peace and security and the role of the United Nations.

In today's new world, national interests need to be defined in broader terms. Globalization is a reality. It is here to stay. It offers enormous opportunities, but also the risk of exclusion and, above all, of marginalization. We need to establish a set of rules to steer globalization, so to speak. The United Nations has a crucial role to play in this regard in order to transform it into a positive force, making it possible to advance towards development throughout the world so that each human being can achieve self-fulfilment.

Our job is to develop an integrated response at three levels: national, regional and global. At the national level, we need to give priority to education, to take advantage of fresh opportunities and to reduce the gap between poor and rich. At the regional level, we must develop strategies for common action in order to work together to open up more our economic spaces, to reduce conflicts and to make real progress together in the area of education. At the global level, the Secretary-General's report points the way. We need to open up markets more to the commodities of the developing countries; to create a world compact with the private sector to increase investment in African and other low-income countries; and to provide debt relief and increase official development assistance to stimulate growth in the poor countries. We hope that the process launched in the United Nations on financing for development will offer an opportunity to make great progress.

In order to combat poverty, national efforts are necessary, but the consistent support of the international community is also crucial in order to mainstream the human and environmental dimensions into the globalization process. We must develop a consistent, global, approach in the economic, social and environmental protection areas. The question of the relationship between trade, the environment and social standards should be dealt with. Health, nutrition, employment, respect for cultural identity and, in particular, education, are all essential areas. Education must be central to international concerns.

We must recognize that it is impossible for the poor countries, the vulnerable countries and the less powerful countries to catch the globalization train. Someone who cannot read cannot enjoy the benefits of information technologies; that goes without saying. The national and international efforts that need to be made are enormous, but they need to be made.

Debt relief is necessary; indeed, it is crucial for many countries. It is absolutely vital for some of us. However, the excessive conditionalities imposed by the creditors are counterproductive. The question is, what can we do to make sure that this problem does not crop up again? The developing countries have experience with this. The experience of the last decade is hardly encouraging in this area.

The development of strategies for debt relief in Africa has been proposed. As an African, I think I can say that our continent is still awaiting the results. The conditionalities are difficult and complex, but, when we look to the future, education and increased investments are the key elements. The African countries definitely need investment in manufactured goods and intermediate goods. To that end, it is essential that we build national infrastructures in order to attract private investments.

Africa must create wider economic spaces, which are essential for the success of its industrial development. Participants said that they were in favour of a conference of the countries of the South, the theme of which would be revisiting globalization. We also deplored the fact that the new international economic order, which was debated in the United Nations in the '60s and '70s, is no longer relevant.

The International Monetary Fund, in the view of the round table, should be reformed. When it was created, a large number of the members were still colonies. Today a discussion is under way in the countries of the North about the new role of this institution. However, the South is not a participant. This situation must be redressed.

I turn to peace and security. Troop-contributing countries must be more involved in the negotiations and in the follow-up in work in the Security Council.

Harmonizing regional mechanisms with the work of the Security Council is something that should be guaranteed. As was the case in the previous round tables, we stressed the fact that the present composition of the Security Council no longer reflected today's realities. While much of the work of the Council concerns the situation in Africa, Africa has no permanent seat on that body.

We must take into account the underlying causes of conflicts, which lie in poverty, instability, drug-trafficking, violence and terrorism, all of which are important manifestations and causes of destabilization.

On the subject of terrorism, I think that no one in the interactive dialogue, which was entirely informal and free-flowing, challenged the idea that there was interaction between the idea of democracy and the concept of terrorism. There can be no democracy as long as there is terrorism. Moreover, terrorism cannot be a phenomenon which just concerns one, two or three countries. It is a worldwide scourge and it must be discussed by the whole world community. We particularly recommend to the Secretary-General that a fund be established or that a way be found to finance a study on the various sources of financing of international terrorism. This would be very salutary for democratic experiences which are still emerging in Africa.

The eradication of terrorism is a condition for the establishment and the strengthening of the democratic process. Democracy is imperiled by terrorism on a daily basis because terrorism can exploit democratic freedom to develop. It is disquieting that terrorism is acquiring increasingly internationalized forms and that it has particular links with organized crime, including drug-trafficking. The General Assembly, therefore, needs to remain actively involved in this question. It needs to consider ways to combat this scourge. It was also proposed that the United Nations undertake a study — perhaps several studies — on this in as objective a manner as possible, on sources of financing, particularly countries which are bridgeheads for terrorist activities in the world.

The need to strengthen the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping has been reaffirmed, and the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report were welcomed with satisfaction.

I would also like to tell the General Assembly that a serious problem was raised in rather pathetic terms — the problem of debt. The past was revisited. The centuries of slavery and colonization, the plundering of the riches of the third world, the depersonalization of our peoples, the deculturation, the current plundering of the grey matter of our peoples — all of these things led one delegation to reject the idea of wiping out debt, and the following language was used: who owes what to whom? I tried to moderate this by asking if this was a question, and a very curt answer came: this is the question.

I think rather more moderate proposals came from another country that we analyse the debts of the indebted countries to understand how the debt was accumulated. This might be done in a South-South framework in which the United Nations could be involved as a partner.

I think everyone unanimously agreed to recommend the reform of the Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the Bretton Woods agreements and all of the institutions born just after the Second World War.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I thank President Bouteflika for his presentation. Now we have heard them all, and warm thanks to them.

Now we will turn to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, contained in draft resolution A/55/L.2.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the Declaration. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 55/2).

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General *(spoke in French)*: I thank you, Mr. President, Madam President, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. May I first thank you all for attending this historic Summit and for having given us clear guidance. In the course of these three days I have listened to you closely, and I have read carefully the Declaration you have just adopted. I was struck by the noteworthy convergence of views expressed concerning the challenge before us and by the urgency of your appeal for action.

(*spoke in English*)

You have said that your first priority is the eradication of extreme poverty. You have set specific targets to that goal, and you have prescribed measures for achieving them. If the measures are really taken, we all know the targets can be reached.

Many of you have said that you understand the potential benefits of globalization but that your peoples have yet to feel them. You have acknowledged that part of the solution lies in the hands of sovereign States, which must give priority to needs of their people, especially the poorest. We all know that States alone cannot solve the problems of globalization. They need to work in partnership with the private sector and with civil society in the broadest sense.

You have also called for a more equitable world economy in which all countries have a fair chance to compete and in which those who have more will do more for those who have less. Speaker after speaker has stressed the urgent need to release poor countries from their burden of debt. You expressed interest in finding new approaches to this problem, including a system of arbitration or mediation which would balance the interests of creditors with those of sovereign debtors. I will give further thought to this idea and suggest ways in which it could be done.

You have said that it is intolerable, as we enter a new century, that millions of innocent people, especially women and children, should still fall victim to brutal conflict. We all know that in this area the United Nations has fallen short of the world's expectations. We must strengthen our capacity and improve our performance so that vulnerable communities feel able to count on us in their hour of need. That is why so many of you have welcomed the report of the Panel on Peacekeeping Operations and promised to act quickly on its recommendations.

You have reaffirmed the vital importance of international law, which is the common language of our global community. Over 80 of you have taken action during this Summit to adhere to international legal instruments that are central to the spirit of our Charter. Most of these actions concerned protocols that seek to protect children from abuses that bring shame to all humankind. Your action is a welcome sign that humankind is coming together at last to put an end to them.

You have called for higher priority to be given to the special needs of Africa, where poverty and all its attendant ills seem most intractable.

You have said that we need more effective international institutions, starting with the United Nations. In your minds, clearly, the reform we began together three years ago is not complete. I agree and look forward to working with you to take it further. Almost every one of you has called for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. That surely must give new impetus to the search for consensus on this thorny but unavoidable issue. You are rightly concerned with the effectiveness of this Organization. You want action, and above all, you want results. You are right, and I look forward to working with you over the coming year to ensure that the United Nations of the twenty-first century can deliver real improvements in the life of the world's peoples.

Excellencies, you have sketched out clear directions for adapting this Organization to its role in the new century. But ultimately, you are yourselves the United Nations. It lies in your power, and therefore it is your responsibility, to reach the goals that you have defined. Only you can determine whether the United Nations rises to the challenge. For my part, I hereby rededicate myself as from today to carrying out your mandate. I know that the whole staff of the United Nations does the same.

Now let me wish you all a safe journey home. Thank you very much.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Now I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland and Co-Chairperson of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): This Summit has been a great success. The Millennium Declaration gives inspiration and guidance for the future of the United Nations. The Summit spirit has been excellent. Now the General Assembly has to continue the same spirit.

The clear message of the Summit is that the world and its people need the United Nations and want to make it even stronger. At the same time, it is clear that we also need to strengthen the possibilities and to have contact with the people outside this house. All the

world leaders addressed globalization, and rightly so. Another important demand is the participation and input of the whole civil society.

I think you all are already convinced that the round table discussions have been an excellent new start for the discussions and to show the political will. I do hope that round-table discussions will be used in the future. Their informal character adds a great deal to the United Nations normal way of working, and this is the way to create the political will that we all need to do what we want.

The Summit has also been complemented by many side events, and I do not want to mention them all, as I do not want to risk omitting any. I think all have been a great success.

I thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your excellent initiative in organizing this Summit and all the preparations to make it a success. I hope you will give our warm thanks to the Secretariat staff and all the people we have not even met but who have made the Summit possible.

Last but not least, I would also turn now to my colleague, President Sam Nujoma and thank him for his devotion and also his excellent cooperation I have felt during this Summit. I hope it is a good symbol for larger cooperation.

Thank you, colleagues, for your invaluable contribution and active participation in the Summit. I have the feeling we made a new spirit for the new millennium.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): We have come to the close of this historic Millennium Summit of the United Nations. Over the past three days, an unprecedented number of heads of State or Government have gathered here and reaffirmed their faith in and commitment to the United Nations in its search for world peace, development and human security in the twenty-first century. I thank all my dear colleagues for the thoughtful and constructive contributions they made in plenary meeting and also for their fruitful exchanges in the interactive Round Tables. That was a good innovation at the United Nations and it passed the test. I also extend my deepest gratitude to my colleague and Co-Chairperson, Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, for her leadership and cooperation.

The Chairmen of the four interactive round tables did much outstanding work, and I also extend my deepest appreciation to all of them. They are: Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore; Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of Poland; Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, President of Venezuela; and Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of Algeria. Their summaries, presented here, highlighted the range of challenges and problems facing the United Nations and the whole world. The Secretary-General's report (A/54/2000) and the Millennium Declaration have given us proposals and ideas for action. In addition, our illustrious Secretary-General has initiated many outstanding tasks, especially with his report, entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", which provided an excellent basis for our discussions. I encourage him to continue his courageous efforts.

We all owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to the outgoing President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session for a job well done, and specifically for the concise, political, authoritative and visionary United Nations Millennium Declaration, produced under his able leadership. In this context, I congratulate the newly elected President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, and call upon him to ensure the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and in particular to pay attention to paragraph 51 thereof.

In our various statements, we placed people and their legitimate interests at the centre of our common pursuit. We agreed to take constructive and additional steps to address the special needs of Africa and to assist the people themselves in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable social development. We spoke eloquently about the recognized need to comprehensively strengthen the United Nations and effective means to do so. Many speakers reaffirmed the centrality of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. They further reiterated the urgency of the reform and enlargement of the Security Council in all respects to make it more representative, transparent, democratic and legitimate. At the end, we adopted a historic Declaration with a vision for the future and far-reaching implications for the peoples of the world.

But the peoples of the world want to know what is next, after this unique Summit. The Declaration in itself will not put bread on their tables, heal the sick,

arrest the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, stop the wars, erase poverty and the burden of debt, enhance respect for human rights and guarantee their right to development. We cannot, therefore, afford to go back home from here and continue business as usual. We, as heads of State or Government, have the mandate and the responsibility individually and collectively to take bold steps to help the people to help themselves. We must act now by translating our commitments into action. It is time to combine our vision and our renewed commitment with the increased resources for the United Nations in a purposeful manner so that it can move forward. We must fulfil our promises of a better, more peaceful, more prosperous and more just world for all. The time to act is now.

Lastly, I thank you once again for the opportunity to co-chair this historic Millennium Summit and for your kind cooperation for a united world freed at last from all social scourges and human suffering.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the Summit

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I declare closed the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 8 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.9

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The President: Twice already, I have urged delegations to be in the General Assembly Hall on time, and I do so once more.

But owing to the absence of a quorum, I am obliged now to suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: first report of the General Committee (A/55/250)

The President: The Assembly will now consider the first report of the General Committee, which has been circulated in document A/55/250. I shall refer to specific sections and paragraphs of the report which contain recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII to the Assembly's rules of procedure.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of those provisions?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 3 of its report, the General Committee took note of annex I — entitled "Guidelines on the rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly" — to General Assembly resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly"; of the annex to General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system"; and of paragraph 1 of resolution 52/163 of 15 December 1997, entitled "Amendment to rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly". The provisions of the resolutions are reflected in the document before the General Assembly under the relevant sections.

In paragraph 4 of its report, the General Committee took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/264 (A/52/856) and 51/241 (A/52/855).

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 4 of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now examine section II of the report, which deals with the organization of the session.

We turn first to section II.B, which deals with the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly.

In paragraph 7 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 45/45, recommending that certain Main Committees should meet in sequential order.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-63719 (E)

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 7 of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 8, the General Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraphs 30, 31 and 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, providing that the Main Committees should hold organizational meetings before the commencement of the general debate and should meet in substantive session only after the end of the general debate; and that the First and Fourth Committees should meet, to the extent feasible, in a sequential manner.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 8?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 9, the General Committee took note of paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 52/163, which amends the first sentence of rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly to read as follows:

> "Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur".

In paragraph 10, the General Committee took note of the fact that measures introduced to reduce costs relating to overtime would be strictly enforced.

We now turn to section II.C, on the closing date of the fifty-fifth session.

In paragraph 11, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly should recess no later than Tuesday, 5 December 2000.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 12, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the closing date of the fifth-fifth session will be subject to a decision of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 12?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 13, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the First Committee should complete its work by Friday, 3 November; the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee by Thursday, 9 November; the Third Committee by Friday, 10 November; the Sixth Committee by Tuesday, 21 November; and the Second and Fifth Committees by Friday, 1 December 2000.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to section II.D, concerning the schedule of meetings.

In paragraph 14, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that morning meetings should start at 10 a.m. promptly for all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to remind members that, for the afternoon meetings, I intend to begin promptly at 3 p.m.

In the same paragraph, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that, as a cost-saving measure, plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, including informals, be adjourned by 6 p.m. and that no meetings be held on weekends, with the exception of the general debate. The Committee further recommends that this cost-saving measure should also apply, for the remainder of 2000, to meetings on the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 15, the General Committee recommends that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed, and of at least one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In that connection, I should like to endorse strongly the practical suggestion made at previous sessions, for each delegation to designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

In paragraph 16, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should be reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In that regard, I should like to impress upon members that a 10-minute delay of the start of every meeting at Headquarters would result in a waste of approximately $800,000 a year. I therefore sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort to cooperate in this regard, so that all meetings can start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

In section II.E, concerning the general debate, the General Committee took note of the fact that the general debate would be held from Tuesday, 12 September, to Saturday, 16 September 2000, and from Monday, 18 September, to Friday, 22 September 2000.

In paragraph 18, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 21 of the annex to resolution 51/241, where the Assembly indicated a voluntary guideline of up to 20 minutes for each statement in the general debate.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 18?

It was so decided.

The President: In that regard, I should like to remind delegations of the request by the Secretariat that speakers deliver their statements at a normal speed within the given time-frame at all times to allow for proper interpretation.

In paragraph 19, the General Committee endorsed the suggestion of the Secretary-General that the list of speakers in the general debate be closed on Thursday, 14 September, at 6 p.m.

In view of the very large number of speakers already inscribed on the list, I urge representatives to take the floor in the order in which they appear on the list of speakers in the general debate. Those who are unable to speak at the scheduled time will be put at the end of the list for that meeting.

In paragraph 20, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to a previous decision of the Assembly to strongly discourage the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered. The Committee recommends that this provision should also apply during the fifty-fifth session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee also recommends to the Assembly that, after delivering their statements, speakers in the general debate should leave the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the Assembly also approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to section II.F. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions concerning explanations of vote and right of reply contained in paragraph 21?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to limit points of order to five minutes, as recommended in paragraph 22?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 23, in connection with the length of statements, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which provides that outside the general debate, there shall be a 15-minute time limit in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees.

The President: In paragraph 24, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General on the

implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), which states that since in plenary meetings the length of statements in debates other than the general debate averages eight minutes, the General Assembly may wish to review the recommendation contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 24 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions regarding the length of statements contained in paragraph 25?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.G deals with records of meetings.

In paragraph 26, the General Committee took note of the fact that verbatim records would be provided during the fifty-fifth session for the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and for the meetings of the First Committee, and that summary records would be provided for the meetings of the General Committee and the other Main Committees of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 26 concerning transcriptions of the debates of some of the meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation also contained in paragraph 26 that the practice not to reproduce *in extenso* statements made in a Main Committee be maintained for the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.H concerns concluding statements in the General Assembly and the Main Committees.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of that section?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.I concerns resolutions.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 28 to 31?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section II.J, concerning documentation.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provision relating to reports of the Secretary-General or subsidiary organs contained in paragraph 32?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 33, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraph 5 of Section C of resolution 54/248 of 23 December 1999, which emphasize that documentation be available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in each of the six official languages of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 33?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 34, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 32 of the annex to resolution 51/241, appealing to all bodies to exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports and to biennialize and triennialize the presentation of reports.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of that paragraph?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.K refers to questions related to the programme budget.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 35 to 37?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 38, which concerns subparagraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to the observations of the Secretary-General regarding the fact that the preparation of a statement of programme

budget implications by the Secretary-General may take a few days. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the draft resolution can be acted on by the Assembly.

The Secretary-General thus considers it desirable that Member States submit proposals sufficiently in advance to avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the observations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 38?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 39, the General Committee, at the suggestion of the Secretary-General, also draws the attention of the General Assembly to section VI of its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, on procedures for administrative and budgetary matters, and to resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, by which the provisions of resolution 45/248 B were reaffirmed.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 39?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.L concerns observances and commemorative meetings.

We turn first to paragraph 40. The General Committee recommends that, with the exception of the anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly should adopt the suggested format for commemorative meetings, including limiting each statement to 15 minutes.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraph 40?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly also approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 41 regarding the scheduling of observances and commemorative meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the General Assembly to turn to section II.M, which refers to special conferences.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations referred to in paragraphs 42 and 43?

It was so decided.

The President: In section II.N, concerning meetings of subsidiary organs, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, that the subsidiary organs referred to in paragraph 44 be authorized to meet during the main part of the fifty-fifth session.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section III of the report of the General Committee, which contains observations on the organization of future sessions of the General Assembly. In paragraph 45, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 17 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which states, inter alia, that the

> "plenary meetings of the General Assembly shall be formally opened every year on the first Tuesday following 1 September".

In that connection, the Committee also draws the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), in particular to paragraphs 16 and 17, which highlight the subsequent action that needs to be taken and the difficulty that will be encountered in implementing that provision. As stated in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's report, in recent years the closing date has been the Monday before the opening of the next session. Were the General Assembly to retain this practice, the closing date would consistently fall on an official holiday of the Organization, for which financial and other implications may need to be considered. Paragraph 17 of that report further states that the General Assembly may wish to decide on a closing date for future sessions that will fall on a working day.

In paragraph 46, the General Committee, noting the ad hoc decisions that had to be taken by the

General Assembly concerning the opening and/or closing dates of the fifty-second, fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, recommends to the Assembly that it address, during its fifty-fifth session, the question of the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions with a view to deciding on a formula to determine the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions.

In paragraph 47, the General Committee, taking into account the opening date of the regular sessions, also recommends to the Assembly a review of the question of the mandatory deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having programme budget implications.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 45 and approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 46 and 47?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section IV of the report of the General Committee, relating to the adoption of the agenda. It starts at paragraph 48.

I would first recall rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which provides that:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion".

I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

With regard to paragraph 49, may I consider that it is the wish of the Assembly to direct its Main Committees to review their agendas with a view to streamlining their programme of work, as suggested in that paragraph?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Again, may I urge members of the Assembly to give careful thought to the suggestion by the Secretary-General, taking into account especially paragraphs 23 to 26 of the annex to resolution 51/241, to consider deferring to a later session items for which decisions or action are not required at the present session.

In paragraph 51, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 59 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 52, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 93 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 53, in connection with items 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181 and 187 of the draft agenda, the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of one single item, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 54, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 55, in connection with item 173 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Inter-American Development Bank in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 56, in connection with item 182 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 57, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 183.

In paragraph 58, in connection with item 184 of the draft agenda, "Towards global partnerships", in paragraph 15 of document A/55/250, the item number referred to should read "184". A corrigendum to the document will be distributed. The General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 59, the General Committee recommends that item 185 of the draft agenda, "World drug problem", be deleted from the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 60, in connection with item 186 of the draft agenda, "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 61, in connection with item 188 of the draft agenda, "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict", the General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 62, in connection with item 189 of the draft agenda, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda which the General Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly.

In accordance with past practice, we shall follow the numbering given in paragraph 63 of the General Committee's report (document A/55/250) and, where it seems appropriate, we shall consider items in groups. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item, except when such discussion can assist the Assembly in deciding whether or not to include an item in the agenda.

Items 1 to 6 have already been dealt with.

We turn to items 7 to 50. May I remind delegations that we are dealing only with the question of the inclusion of the items. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that items 51 to 64 are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite members to turn to items 65 to 81, relating to disarmament. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to items 82 to 91. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to items 92 to 102, relating to international economic issues. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Items 103 to 114 relate to social and humanitarian questions. May I take it that these items are also to be included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, may I take it that items 115 to 153, dealing with administrative and financial questions, are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to items 154 to 165. If there is no objection, I will take it that these items are included in the agenda.

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to items 166 to 168. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly has already decided to include items 169 to 176 in the agenda of the current session.

We now turn to items 177 to 179. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section V of the report of the General Committee on allocation of items. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 64?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 67 to 71. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers refer to the agenda in paragraph 63 of the report before us, namely, document A/55/250.

We turn first to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (a), which concerns item 10. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (b), relating to item 18. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (c), relating to item 49, entitled "The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (d) concerning item 51. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraph 67 (e), relating to item 64, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (f), relating to item 170, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (g), relating to item 173, entitled "Towards global partnerships". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (h), relating to item 174, entitled "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 67 (i), relating to item 175, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 68, relating to item 73, entitled "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation pertaining to item 73?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 69 relating to item 107, entitled "Advancement of women". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to the recommendation in paragraph 70 (a), relating to item 169, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to the recommendation in paragraph 70 (b), relating to item 176, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 71 (a), relating to item 171, entitled "Observer status for the Inter-American Development Bank in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 71 (b), relating to item 172, entitled "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee. As no member wishes to speak, I invite the Assembly to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration in plenary meeting.

Taking into account the decisions we have just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items proposed for the First Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee.

May I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Third Committee, as proposed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Fifth Committee, as proposed in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Sixth Committee in paragraph 72 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their kind cooperation at this meeting.

Each main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin and organize its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure and paragraphs 30 and 31 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

In addition, kindly again note that the First Committee should complete its work by Friday, 3 November; the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) by Thursday, 9 November; the Third Committee by Friday 10 November; the Sixth Committee by Tuesday, 21 November; and the Second and Fifth Committees by Friday, 1 December 2000.

I hope that the Main Committees will continue the effort they demonstrated in the fifty-fourth session in concluding their work on time.

I wish to recall and underline that all meetings must start punctually at 10 a.m. and at 3 p.m., and I personally intend to ensure that we all keep to our commitment taken today. This undertaking also applies to the Secretariat, which must ensure that all documentation in all languages is available on time so that meetings can proceed without any delay.

I should now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly. Members will recall resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998 and its annex, as well as a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002 that outlines the Secretary-General's understanding of the implementation of the modalities annexed to the resolution.

I should like to draw the Assembly's attention in particular to paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 52/250, which reads as follows:

> "The right to make interventions, with a precursory explanation or the recall of relevant General Assembly resolutions being made only once by the President of the General Assembly at the start of each session of the Assembly".

Accordingly, for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the observer of Palestine will therefore participate in the work of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 and resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention by Palestine in this session.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.10

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1)

The President: The General Assembly, in accordance with the decision taken at its 9th plenary meeting on 11 September 2000, will now take up agenda item 10, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", to hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: "The tumult and the shouting dies; the captains and the kings depart."

In other years this day, when the Assembly begins its general debate, marks the climax of the United Nations calendar. This year, coming the week after our historic Millennium Summit, it may seem something of an anticlimax.

But I prefer to see it as the moment when we roll up our sleeves and start putting into action the bold pledges that our heads of State or Government have made. It is in that spirit that I have the honour to present to the Assembly my annual report on the work of the Organization.

This year I have not tried to give my annual report any grand, overarching theme. I felt that the Assembly would neither need nor want that, since I had already set out, in my millennium report, what I see as the major challenges for humanity, and for this Organization, at the start of the new century.

Needless to say, I am delighted that many of the commitments and targets I suggested in that report were solemnly adopted by heads of State or Government in their Declaration last Friday.

Clearly, there is broad consensus on what needs to be done — broader than many would have expected in so large and diverse an Organization. What is vital now, however, is that we also agree on the means of doing it, and that we equip ourselves with the right tools.

In particular, it is vital that this Organization, the United Nations itself, should be capable of playing the role that the world's peoples expect of it. It must be, as the heads of State or Government declared, a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities they have outlined. These are the fight for development, which is also the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease, including the worldwide scourge of HIV/AIDS; the fight against injustice in all its forms, from gross inequalities of power and wealth, through corruption, discrimination and oppression to the extremes of mass destruction or genocide; the fight against violence, terror and crime, which take on new forms as we develop new technology, and which regrettably march in step with the development of a global economy; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home, the earth — a

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fight that still does not receive the priority attention that it merits, despite the constant accumulation of evidence that our present patterns of production and consumption are ecologically unsustainable.

I do not mean, of course, that this Organization should be able to win all these battles by itself. If the twentieth century has taught us anything, it is that large-scale, centralized government does not work. It does not work at the national level, and it is even less likely to work at the global level.

Governments can bring about change, not by acting alone but by working together with other actors — with commercial enterprises, and with civil society in its broadest sense.

Governments can define norms and principles, and plans of action, after carefully listening to the views of civil society. But then they need to work with appropriate partners to put those norms into practice.

Your heads of State or Government have reaffirmed the central position of this Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations and have resolved to enable it to play that role effectively. It is up to you to give effect to that resolution, by taking decisions which reflect the will of the great majority of Member States, and taking them when they are needed.

Consensus is highly desirable, but it need not mean waiting for absolute unanimity on every sub-clause among 189 Member States. The minority, often a very small minority, should not withhold its consent unreasonably. Whatever we think of the veto in the Security Council, it surely has no place in this Assembly. We can no longer afford to operate always at the level of the lowest, and slowest, common denominator. It is up to you, likewise, to achieve the comprehensive reform of the Security Council that your heads of State or Government have called for — a reform that will make the Council more representative and legitimate, but also more effective.

In this connection, I draw your attention particularly to the request addressed to you by your heads of State or Government to consider expeditiously the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. As you know, the Panel's recommendations are intended precisely to make this Organization more effective in its primary task of keeping the peace. Some of them fall within the area of responsibility of the Security Council, which decided, during its summit-level meeting last week, that it, too, would consider them expeditiously. Some fall fully within my own purview as Secretary-General, and I and my staff have already started work on implementing them.

But the largest number call for decisions by this Assembly, not least because they have budgetary implications. I will shortly submit to you an implementation plan, in the hope that within a year we will see real change. Never again must the United Nations find itself without the means to protect those who have been encouraged to put their trust in it.

Not only in peace operations, but also across the whole range of our activities, it is up to you to ensure that this Organization is provided, on a timely and predictable basis, with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates.

It is up to you to agree on the clear rules of procedure that will enable us in the Secretariat, by adopting the best management practices and technologies available, and by concentrating on the tasks that reflect your priorities, to make the best use of those resources.

I would add that it is up to you to allocate those resources in a way that reflects your current priorities, rather than condemning us to operate with a budget frozen in time.

Above all, we must make the best use of the Organization's human resources, the men and women whose job it is to implement your decisions. It is vital that we attract staff of the highest calibre and give them full opportunity to develop their talents. It is even more vital that we give them better protection when they are sent to serve the cause of humanity in situations of conflict and danger.

I shall shortly submit proposals to you for improvements in both these areas — human resources management and the safety of personnel. I trust you will act on them promptly.

(*spoke in French*)

It will also be up to you to see to it that the Organization is accommodated in premises worthy of it. Today, our Headquarters, a magnificent set of buildings whose elegant silhouette is known in every corner of the world, needs urgently to be renovated and

modernized. We cannot continue indefinitely to deal only with the most urgent needs, because this will be an increasingly expensive solution.

That is why I have proposed a master plan, in which I have considered several possible solutions and envisaged various ways of financing them. It emerges very clearly that major modernization works will cost a great deal of money, but it is also very clear that if we do nothing to change the situation, then the expense will soon become much greater, particularly in energy costs. I therefore call upon you urgently to take the necessary measures while there is still time.

Last, but definitely not least, it is largely up to you to ensure that parliamentarians, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general have more opportunities to make their contributions to United Nations activities, to the fulfilment of its objectives and to the implementation of its programmes.

In this context, I am sure the Assembly will forgive me if I repeat here what I wrote in my *millennium report*. The agencies of civil society have made an important contribution to articulating and defending global norms.

(spoke in English)

Since I submitted the report, we have made headway on the specific proposals I made for new partnerships. We are bringing new information technologies within reach of more people in developing countries, and we are going to use those technologies to bring medical knowledge where it is most needed, and to ensure that help reaches the victims of disasters with a minimum of delay.

But we are not doing this alone. We are doing it in partnership with volunteers, with corporations and with philanthropic foundations. There is much, much more to be achieved through these and other kinds of partnership.

It is clear that the United Nations and the world's people have much to gain from opening the Organization further, including the work of this Assembly, to such a vital source of energy and expertise.

One role of the United Nations is to be the forum where international norms are agreed and promulgated, and where all voices can be heard, especially those of the poor and vulnerable, whose views and interests are often ignored elsewhere. Another role is to help form coalitions for change at the global level. And, of course, the United Nations must continue to play the primary role assigned to it by its founders: that of keeping the peace.

What sort of Organization can play these roles? One that is open, one that is flexible, one that is efficient, one that is representative of all the world's peoples and enjoys legitimacy in their eyes.

Those are the qualities which I have done my best to cultivate in this Organization since I became its Secretary-General. But, the key decisions lie in your hands.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

Agenda item 9

General debate

The President: The Assembly will now begin the general debate. Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind members of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 9th plenary meeting on 11 September 2000, that congratulations should not be expressed inside the General Assembly Hall after the speech has been delivered.

In this connection, may I remind members of another decision taken by the Assembly at the same meeting: that speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, would leave the Assembly Hall through Room GA-200, located behind the podium before returning to their seats.

I should also like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 9th plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Thursday, 14 September, at 6 p.m. May I request delegations to be good enough to provide estimated speaking times that are as accurate as possible. This will facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

I should now like to recall for the attention of Members paragraph 21 of the annex to resolution 51/241, whereby the General Assembly indicated a *voluntary guideline of up to 20 minutes for each* statement in the general debate. Within this given time-

frame, I should like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at the normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly.

The first speaker in the general debate is His Excellency Mr. Luiz Felipe Palmeira Lampreia, the Minister for Foreign Relations of Brazil. I give him the floor.

Mr. Lampreia (Brazil): Brazil applauds your election, Sir, to preside over the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Your personal political experience and Finland's historic contribution to the promotion of peace, human rights and social development are valuable credentials that you bring to the honoured task of chairing our work.

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I pay tribute to your predecessor, Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab. His diplomatic skills and commitments to the highest ideals of the United Nations insured him a decisive role at the helm of the fifty-fourth session.

I wish to make a very special reference to our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. His moral authority has served as a beacon as we strive to fulfil the principles and goals of the United Nations. His report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", is a contribution of fundamental importance to the cause of peace and justice, and to a stronger United Nations. It will serve as a permanent source of inspiration as we ponder the crucial decisions the Organization is called upon to make.

Brazil had the satisfaction to co-sponsor the resolution bringing Tuvalu into the United Nations family. We salute Tuvalu as our newest member.

For the sixth consecutive time it is my honour to take part in the opening of the general debate. On all previous occasions, I took stock both of the positive and negative aspects of the current state of world affairs, the facts that afford us satisfaction and those that are cause for frustration and even indignation. This is our daily challenge and the motivating force behind our work.

We meet here for the last time this century. We all know that the twentieth century has been marred by a fundamental contradiction. We have seen a growing abundance of intellectual and material resources that should have brought about a greater convergence of opportunities and expectations as well as of living standards throughout the world. Yet, what we also saw was a failure to harness the necessary political will to translate those extraordinary possibilities into a reality of progress shared by all. This applies not only to the international community as a whole but is equally valid for the great majority of nations represented here, among which is Brazil itself.

No doubt, we have much to gain in identifying those aspects of our relations with the international environment that are a hindrance to national development. Yet it is equally illuminating to seek within our own countries examples of success and failure that help explain the world we live in. Globalization is asymmetrical in part because it flows from national societies that are themselves socially unbalanced and seem to have lost some of their urge to bring about social justice.

Freedom — the greatest of values — continues to advance on all fronts and in all continents. That is a crucial development. There is cause for concern, however, that the core values of equality and fraternity are dangerously being put aside. It is imperative that these two other essential elements return to the top of our agenda. They must retake their rightful place at the centre of our policy decisions before it is too late — before some are misled into believing that the inevitable price for preserving freedom is the perpetuation of the divide between the rich and the poor, between those who are included and those who suffer exclusion, between the "globalized" and those left behind.

If democracy and freedom are to put down firm roots within our countries, we must foster a genuine sense of solidarity that translates into effective action. Only thus will we build an international order that is conducive to the preservation of peace and can function as an engine of sustained growth. It is unacceptable that major global issues and campaigns for transnational solidarity be manipulated and exploited in order to disguise what amounts to the protection of narrow interests. Unfortunately, this is what is happening in the field of international trade.

First, the inconsistency between free trade rhetoric and the continued use of protectionist policies of various types by developed countries. As I stated at the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle, the name of this game is discrimination. And discrimination, especially when waged against the weakest, is the absolute negation of solidarity. We must

reverse these grave distortions in international trade, and especially as concerns agricultural products.

It is inadmissible that the most prosperous nations, whose economies are strongly based in the manufacturing and service industries, should be legally entitled to restrict access to their markets for agricultural goods, while they call for the free flow of those goods in which they benefit from an enormous competitive advantage. It is even more intolerable that these countries be allowed, as is presently the case, to subsidize the production and export of agricultural commodities to the tune of dozens of billions of dollars. These policies cause enormous harm to exporting nations that are more efficient and competitive in this field, but lack the financial means to offer equally generous fiscal incentives to their farmers.

Secondly, not satisfied with the persistence of this highly discriminatory situation — where what is said often deviates from what is done — there are those in the developed countries who give voice to sectional interests and defend a new offensive against the exports of developing nations. This is what the new language of protectionism, camouflaged as humanitarian internationalism, would seem to suggest. It unfurls the seductive banner of labour and environmental standards, which, if adopted, would further restrict the access of products from developing countries to the markets of rich countries.

This rhetoric and its appeal to certain segments of public opinion might suggest that the exports of developing countries pose a threat to the economic well-being and the way of life of the more developed societies. We all know this is not true. After all, these exports represent less than a third of world trade and are made up mostly of raw materials.

The main objective of those who wish to introduce labour conditionalities into trade rules has little to do with improving the quality of life of workers in poor countries. Their fundamental aim is to protect backward sectors of their own economies that strictly speaking are no longer capable of competing effectively in a free trade environment.

Sanctions and commercial barriers are inadequate tools to enhance labour standards and to protect the environment in developing countries. Our countries and our own societies, more than any other, are interested in achieving those very same objectives, which is why we need more — not less — exports and economic growth.

This is a message that developing countries must make ring out in a clear and powerful voice. We must instil in developed societies an understanding that they are not alone in the world. Above all, they must not presume to unilaterally write the rules of international trade solely according to their interests and points of view, as if the other 5 billion human beings did not have equally legitimate aspirations to progress, justice and well-being.

Nations must come increasingly to comprehend and respect differing realities and objectives among themselves. At the same time, they must recognize their commonalities and affinities; explore and enlarge areas of convergence and opportunities for cooperation; and overcome suspicions, rivalries and disputes.

Nowadays it is above all through regional integration that this learning process takes place. For most countries, it opens the door to a more intensive and meaningful participation in global affairs.

In the Americas, and more specifically in Latin America, we have set ourselves firmly on this course. The countries of the region are increasingly integrated among themselves and into the world. These are the two inseparable faces of the same forward movement.

A few days ago in Brasilia, on the initiative of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a meeting of Presidents of South America took place for the first time in our history. This gathering sought to bring together the leaders of South America around the common challenges that grow out of our shared geography and physical proximity. It is only natural that this first meeting should have occurred in Brazil, which shares borders with nine of its 11 South American neighbours, and has lived in harmony with all for over a century in a spirit of peace, friendship and growing determination to move ahead on the road to full integration.

The Presidents took important and concrete steps in this direction that will bear lasting fruit. In the political realm, they agreed to underscore the commitment of the countries of South America to democracy and decided that participation in future South American gatherings would hinge on the preservation of the rule of law and full respect for democratic values and procedures. They also agreed to

hold consultations among their Governments in the event of a threat to democracy in our region.

In trade matters, they resolved to begin negotiations on a free-trade zone between MERCOSUR and the Andean Community, to be established before January 2002 and to be expanded into an economic zone covering all of South America, including Chile, Guyana and Suriname. To this end the Presidents decided to coordinate the planning and funding of projects for integrating the region's infrastructure, in particular in the priority areas of energy, transport and telecommunications. By working together in this way we will more quickly set up the physical links that will enhance South American unity.

Drug trafficking and organized crime are issues that affect, in different forms, all regions of the world. The Presidents highlighted the role of the Organization of American States in the fight against drugs in the hemisphere and the setting up last year of the multilateral evaluation mechanism to assess the performance of our countries in this effort. They also decided to establish systematic consultations among national agencies and to set up a South American anti-laundering task force.

The meeting of Presidents of South America was an event unique in the almost two centuries of independent nationhood for most of the subcontinent. As well as having historic significance and long-term impact, this summit will also generate results in the immediate future.

None is more significant than the commitment to democratic values. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was very much to the point when he said:

> "the South America of today is synonymous with democracy ... In this dawning of democracy, we will not tolerate abuses. And we will increasingly demand the right not only to vote, but to defend freedom, access to information and the judicial guarantees that make elections an effective exercise in democracy".

The United Nations has seen important achievements over this last year. Let me recall a few. The goal of creating a more just, tolerant society was reaffirmed during the follow-up world conferences on women — Beijing +5 — and on social development — Copenhagen +5. At the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, modest but nevertheless significant progress was made towards freeing the world from the scourge of nuclear arms. As one of the New Agenda countries, Brazil is proud of its contribution to the success of the conference, whose results will be a litmus test for future advances in the nuclear disarmament field.

Efforts to establish an International Criminal Court have moved ahead, and Brazil signed the Rome Statute. Those that commit crimes against humanity must not, under any circumstances, go unpunished.

In the Brahimi report (A/55/305), a valuable framework has been laid out on how to strengthen the work of United Nations peacekeeping operations and, as a result, on how to overcome recent failures. The courageous Rwanda and Srebrenica reports offer us a precise diagnosis of what needs to be done.

In Timor, under the leadership of a model international official, Sergio Vieira de Mello, a new State is taking form and coming to life. We express our strongest condemnation of the attack on innocent workers at the United Nations office in Atambua, West Timor, who were helping to achieve this very goal.

In contrast with these achievements, the frustrations are well known. Peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have still to show results; the conflict in Angola goes relentlessly on as a result of UNITA's inexcusable failure to comply with international directives and law, and there is growing awareness of the devastating dimensions of the AIDS epidemic in Africa and in the rest of the world.

Less than a week ago, in a historic meeting in this very Hall, world leaders took stock of the work and achievements of multilateralism. The outcome was a clearer reaffirmation of our determined and unequivocal commitment to reinvigorate the United Nations. We reinforced our convictions about the crucial role of this Organization in ensuring that justice is done and that international peace takes root.

Brazil has always been convinced of this.

In the absence of the United Nations, human rights would be more vulnerable; the distance between antagonists would be wider; the difficulties in eradicating poverty would be greater; the growth of tolerance would be slower and democratic practices would face even stronger opposition.

It may be that the Millennium Summit only gave expression to what we already knew. The historic legacy of this Summit should, then, be our renewed willingness to act.

We all know that it is by mobilizing political will that we can make a difference. The United Nations is the model political forum of the international community and its central goal is to provide the ways and means to bring to life our dearest ideals, values and aspirations.

In this hall there has often been a divorce between words and deeds, between objectives and the tools to achieve them, as if they hailed from different universes, distant and isolated from each other.

It is only through political dialogue, and consultation among States made possible by multilateralism that a degree of rationality and predictability can be brought to the workings of global forces.

To foster multilateralism is to strengthen the United Nations and the modern understanding of the individual as the central beneficiary of international action. Only thus can we look forward to progressive and just governance in this integrated world.

It is our obligation to fulfil our common commitments, so vigorously underscored during the Millennium Summit. We must do so with determination and a sense of urgency.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Madeleine Korbel Albrigh: the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I am honoured to address the Assembly on behalf of the United States and to reinforce the eloquent message President Clinton conveyed during last week's Millennium Summit. Because my father worked here when I was young, I have always considered myself a child of the United Nations. And because I had the privilege to serve here as America's Permanent Representative, I feel at home and so will speak plainly.

The members of this body reflect virtually every culture, ethnicity and geographical region. We are city and country, inland and island, tropical and temperate, developing and industrialized. We are as diverse as humanity.

And yet, in responding to the daunting demands of this new era, we are bound together by the interests we share and the ideals to which we aspire.

We all have a stake in building peace and relieving poverty, championing development and curbing disease. We all want to see the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction reduced, refugees cared for, children nourished, the environment protected, and the status of women advanced.

We all believe the benefits of globalization must be allocated more broadly within and among societies. Because if the new technologies are to ease the old problems, they must help the many who today lack access and skills, so that every village becomes a home to opportunity and every school a midwife to hope.

As the Millennium Summit reflected, we have no shortage of worthy goals. We are right to aim high and take on the mightiest tasks.

But as the Secretary-General has said, progress depends on working together. We need all hands on deck, pulling in the same direction. For each of us, that responsibility begins at home because the international community cannot help any nation that is not striving to help itself.

Each Government has an obligation to observe international norms on human rights, uphold the rule of law, fight corruption and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. But in the twenty-first century, no nation can protect and serve its people simply by going it alone and that is why we all benefit from strengthening regional bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Because of their unique expertise and regional legitimacy, they can be instruments for solving some of the hardest challenges we face. But they will succeed only if we raise our expectations of these organizations, call upon them to act boldly and back them when they do.

Regional bodies can contribute much to the purposes outlined in the Charter, and the goals established during the Millennium Summit. But here again, they cannot do it all.

The role of the United Nations is also vital, because no other institution combines a comprehensive mandate with near universal representation and global reach.

We all have an interest in the success of the United Nations. That is its greatest strength, and also its burden, because 189 nations have to work very hard if they are to agree.

I remember when I came to New York in 1993, I was told by cynics that the United Nations was too bureaucratic to change, and too big ever to achieve consensus on measures to improve its governance.

Those cynics were wrong. With support from many countries, we have made impressive progress.

Compared to seven years ago, the United Nations accomplishes more and wastes less. Accountability has increased and duplication diminished.

The Internal Oversight Office, which did not exist in 1993, has grown steadily more rigorous and is responsible for tens of millions of dollars of savings. A culture of transparency and results is slowly but surely taking hold. Moreover, both United Nations Headquarters and the entire United Nations system are better led than they have ever been.

United Nations leaders and Members can take pride in the gains made, but we all know there is much more work to be done.

That is why we must back the Secretary General's efforts to further improve United Nations management, recognizing that every dollar wasted is a dollar lost to the fight against poverty and to the achievement of other urgent goals.

We must also move ahead rapidly to strengthen peacekeeping, because it is the most visible and vital yardstick of United Nations success and, for people in strife-torn regions, often means the difference between a normal life and no life at all.

There is no magic formula for curing the ills that have plagued United Nations peace operations in the past. But the report, just prepared by Ambassador Brahimi's team, is a solid place to start.

As President Clinton said last week, we need to ensure that United Nations peacekeepers can be deployed with the right training and equipment and the right rules of engagement so they can achieve, not merely attempt, their missions.

This will require a larger peacekeeping staff, on permanent assignment, comprised of the best talent and experience we can find.

It will require military planners the world over to recognize that training for peace operations is a legitimate part of every nation's security strategy. It will require the ability to deploy rapidly not only United Nations military forces, but also civilian police and experts in law enforcement and judicial reform. It will demand improved coordination between military peacekeepers and civilian builders of peace, so that missions begun are completed and recovery bred by reconciliation can take hold.

And it will require additional resources from my Government and from each of yours. And by "additional", I mean resources that should not come at the expense of other core United Nations goals.

The United States will heed the Secretary-General's request that we work together to consider and implement the best recommendations of the Brahimi report.

Whether for peacekeeping or programmes, the United Nations also needs a sustainable and equitable system of financing. We do not have that today. Member States, including my own, must do a better job of making payments on time. But we must also look afresh at the method used to allocate responsibility for United Nations costs.

Last week, the Security Council called for adjustments in the scale of assessments. This plea has been echoed by dozens of other countries and should be acted upon by the General Assembly this fall.

A more equitable system should provide a much stronger foundation for United Nations programmes and missions. It should preserve the special responsibility for peacekeeping of the Security Council's permanent members. It should retain a heavily discounted rate for the poorest countries. And it should reduce the United Nations overall reliance on payments from the United States, while at the same time enabling my Government to write a check to the United Nations for nearly $600 million in prior obligations.

Clearly, adjustments are long overdue. The United Nations needs a firm and reliable financial base. In the weeks ahead, the United States will be pleased to work with members to accomplish this landmark goal.

Further improvements in management and peacekeeping and a sounder financial base are a vital step towards a stronger and more effective United Nations. But we must also stand up to the campaign launched by Baghdad against the United Nations authority and international law.

Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) provides an effective plan for protecting world security through resumed weapons inspections and monitoring inside Iraq. It has expanded the oil-for-food programme that has delivered $8 billion in humanitarian supplies to Iraqi civilians, with $6 billion more on the way. And it would enable Iraq, through compliance with the resolution's terms, to achieve an early suspension of sanctions. Thus far, Baghdad has flatly refused to accept the resolution. The regime's strategy is to ignore its United Nations Charter obligations and to seek to preserve at all costs its capacity to produce the deadliest weapons humanity has ever known.

We must continue to do all we can to ease the hardships faced by Iraq's people. But we must also defend the integrity of this institution, our security and international law.

The Millennium Summit illustrated the United Nations long-standing role as a forum for articulating consensus goals. But achieving these objectives will require action at all levels, from local to global. It will also require a willingness to move well beyond the limits and habits of the past.

Today, the United Nations is taking on a wide array of new issues, what I call "people issues", because they so directly affect the lives of our citizens. They include the challenge of protecting our planet by limiting greenhouse gas emissions; securing safe water supplies; halting desertification; and putting a stop to trafficking in human beings. They especially include the fight against HIV/AIDS, which was highlighted in a letter to the Secretary-General signed by the women Foreign Ministers last night. These and similar challenges are sure to be important components of twenty-first century diplomacy, and because they are global in scope, require a global response.

The United Nations is also playing an increased role in areas where cold war divisions once held it back. Over the past decade, United Nations entities have contributed much by prosecuting war criminals, promoting democracy, supporting human rights and aiding the fight against illegal drugs.

These issues require a willingness to take a stand, as the United Nations has done in holding accountable the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and the Balkans; striving to end rebel outrages in Sierra Leone; and expressing opposition to the long-standing and ongoing violation of basic human rights in Burma.

Let me say this morning that when the Burmese Government tries to blame the victims for the crime, and say that Aung San Suu Kyi and her party are responsible for their own repression, I can only reply that much the same was once said about Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Václav Havel. The world is not fooled, and we must not be silent.

Some argue that speaking out in defence of human rights constitutes interference in internal affairs. I believe it helps to fulfil the purposes of the United Nations Charter, because when international norms are assaulted, the United Nations must do more than simply observe injustice, or report upon it, or sympathize with the victims. We must do all we can, where we can, to stop the perpetrators.

This requires the active backing and participation of United Nations Members, so that respect for international law becomes steadily more universal and the incentives for observing global standards progressively more clear.

The result, if we are united and determined enough, will be a world of greater security, justice and peace. Realistically, this is essential, if we are to achieve the ambitious social goals we have set.

But there is one other essential element as well, and that is democracy. This past summer in Poland, for the first time, more than 100 nations came together to reaffirm democratic principles and ensure that the democratic tide remains a rising one around the world.

We did this not because democracy always produces good Governments, for it does not. But we are convinced by the evidence of the old century that the hopes we share for the new will more readily be

accomplished if people are able to live and work in freedom.

Democracy is the one road we can all walk down together and the best system yet devised for sowing and growing the seeds of economic opportunity.

In promoting democracy, we are not attempting to impose our values on anyone else. In fact, this is not possible, because democracy, by definition, enables citizens within a country to shape their own destinies in accordance with their own convictions and ideals.

Make no mistake. In any country, at any time, dictatorship is an imposition. Democracy is a choice.

As we have learned during the last 55 years, the United Nations provides no guarantees of global peace or prosperity. But it can play a vital role as catalyst and coordinator, and as a bridge connecting the contributions of one to another.

To those who would judge it harshly, I would respond not by pointing first to the deliberations of diplomats such as myself, in surroundings such as these. Instead, I would point to the day-to-day efforts of United Nations workers caring for refugees, feeding children, providing shelter and preventing disease.

I would point to the men and women on the front lines, from Port-au-Prince to Freetown, and from Kosovo to Kisangani, doing some of the world's hardest work, and, as we have been reminded by the recent slayings of employees of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in East Timor, also the most dangerous. It is their efforts and sacrifice, in partnership with so many indigenous and other non-governmental organizations, that truly remind us of the United Nations purpose and of our kinship with one another.

This is, I expect, my last official speech to a United Nations audience. As I stand before you, I am deeply conscious not only of our many accomplishments, but also of the tasks not yet completed.

I am grieved by the conflicts that still rage, and the basic rights and freedoms still denied. I am frustrated by the gaps that still exist between our ideals and actions, and alarmed by the deepening material divide that ultimately threatens every nation, rich and poor alike.

There are those who say it is naïve to think that the future can be made better than the past. I am reminded that this institution was founded by men and women who were as realistic as any human beings could be, for they were the survivors of the worst conflict our world has known and determined that succeeding generations should be saved from holocaust and war. They had faith. Surely we, as well, must have faith that by working together within and outside this Organization, we can move together, step by step towards the lofty goals we have set, and thereby bring about a world more peaceful, prosperous and free than it has ever been. Since 1993, it has been my privilege to work with so many of you, from every part of the globe, in support of the interests we have in common and the dreams our people share.

This morning, I want to thank you for your friendship; pledge my cooperation in the months immediately ahead; and ask respectfully, in turn, for yours. I promise, as well, to serve the cause of international progress and individual liberty not only for as long as I am in office, but for as long as I am alive.

Address by Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Djibouti.

Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Djibouti, His Excellency Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Guelleh *(spoke in French):* On behalf of the people of Djibouti, it is a great pleasure indeed to extend our sincere greetings to one and all at this Millennium Assembly. May I also, Mr. President, convey our congratulations on your election. Your vast and varied experience will serve the Assembly well.

I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, for the excellent work done and the achievements registered. He showed great skill and commitment in his task. Clearly the accomplishments of the fifty-

fourth session were, to a large extent, due to his leadership, dedication and tireless efforts.

No organization, particularly one such as the United Nations, can survive for any length of time if beset, as it is, with mounting demands and dwindling resources, and without deft, tenacious and imaginative leadership. The trials and tribulations of the United Nations have continued unabated during the past year. It has had to restore peace and to tackle wars, conflicts, natural disasters and disease while also addressing development. The list of difficulties goes on. Yet the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has managed to strengthen the Organization and make it better suited to meet the demands of the times. Under his enlightened guidance, the United Nations continues to play a credible and meaningful international role. We are fortunate indeed.

This being the last General Assembly session of the decade, the century and indeed the millennium, it is the ideal time for us to reflect on the state of the world and of its peoples. There has been an all-pervading desire on the part of the United Nations and its Member States, to see fresh momentum in order to generate the necessary energy to deal with the new millennium and address critical issues. We have come to realize that the strength of our resolve and our determination to deal with the challenge of securing a better, safer and healthier world for its inhabitants will be decisive for the future of humankind. In many respects, however, it is still an open question.

It is perhaps a sign of the times when any overview of the world today must give prominence to the fact that the world is being ravaged by a disease, namely AIDS. This deadly epidemic is continuing to spread. We are all aware of its terrible toll, particularly in Africa, where it is decimating youth, the professional classes, the labour force and health-care systems. The will of the international community will be put to the test, and we will see how it responds in crisis situations.

Last year I noted that dialogue had been renewed between Palestine and Israel, which opened a promising opportunity for charting a new course in the Middle East. While it is true that the recent Camp David peace talks are still suspended, nonetheless a great deal was accomplished in terms of fully exploring the scope and diversity of the issues under consideration. There was at least a workable level of trust and a clear willingness to discuss the key "final status" issues of borders, settlements, water, refugees, statehood and, above all, the status of Jerusalem. It is difficult, however, to imagine any resolution or settlement that would not include Palestinian control of East Jerusalem. Israel's continued claim to the entire city, which would include control of Muslim holy sites in the Old City, adjoining Muslim and Christian quarters and selected Arab villages, would be counterproductive to peace.

Any mention of the Middle East must, of course, include a reference to the enormous loss suffered by Syria and the world at large with the death of the long-serving President of Syria, Hafez Al-Assad. We wish the new President, Bashar Al-Assad, all the best in his efforts to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious father.

In my address last year, I touched upon the spread and intensity of wars; rebel and splinter movements; and factional fighting in Africa. Sadly, while there have been some encouraging developments, a basic uncertainty remains. Fortunately, fighting between Djibouti's neighbours, Ethiopia and Eritrea, has ceased, and troop redeployment and the deployment of United Nations observers are expected to take place soon under the ceasefire arrived at under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity. The level of death and destruction in these hostilities simply defies the imagination, and the sight of so many civilians displaced from their homes and deprived of their livelihood, crowded into camps on both sides, is truly a disheartening experience. It is high time for the member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to opt for a comprehensive peace and cessation of hostilities in this subregion, in order collectively to focus on development and address the serious challenges posed by environmental disasters, such as the current looming drought.

As concerns other parts of Africa, the persisting conflict in Angola is still with us, although Government forces appear to be gaining the upper hand. Regarding the conflict in Sierra Leone, the sudden international concern to see that the belligerents are not allowed to sell the precious minerals of their country on the world market should, it is to be hoped, reduce their capacity to wage war. This may be particularly true for both these countries. We are pleased to see the measures being taken by the De Beers group and the Belgian authorities to close

international access to these bloodstained commodities. Similar action must be taken with respect to other commodities as well.

Undoubtedly, the most ominous threat to the continent at present lies in its centre, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the ceasefire arranged last year has suffered a number of setbacks. The United Nations has been unable to deploy troops as envisaged. Talks between the Government and the opposition appear to have broken off, raising the dangerous spectre of a return to civil war, which could be disastrous for the entire continent. The distraught people of that nation deserve a respite from instability and insecurity in order to be able to enjoy normal lives.

In all these critical areas, be it the AIDS crisis, ever-growing poverty, wars, the environment, human rights abuses, weapons of mass destruction or lack of development, the United Nations remains the only Organization with the requisite experience and know-how to focus and refine the disparate efforts of humankind.

Decisions regarding the maintenance of international peace and security lie with the Security Council, which, with the explosion of United Nations membership over the last three decades, has become a not very representative body. If we are to restore confidence in its decisions, there has to be, at all costs, an expansion in its membership, both permanent and non-permanent, with the extension of permanent membership to both developed and non-developed countries. The Council should also have access to better information on unstable regions, and a rapid response capability. Furthermore, when serious humanitarian crises are unfolding, measures to limit the spread and impact of conflict should be taken on a selective, case-by-case basis, but across the board by all Members.

Like last year, I again intend to dwell on the problem of Somalia, and I again request the indulgence of the Assembly. At that time, Somalia was on the verge of total disintegration, following years of political paralysis. Urgent measures were needed to reverse this tragedy, a tragedy to which the international community had grown largely indifferent. The mood was simply one of waiting for the warlords to eliminate one another until a victor emerged with whom business could be done. In the meantime, those individuals carried out systematic dismantling, destruction and looting of the Somali nation, ignoring consistent calls to change their reckless and criminal behaviour.

This, however, cannot be tolerated any longer. The people have spoken at last. They have decided against endless uncertainty and aberration. They were sapped of their strength. The people have now opted for government, law and order, and a better future. We urge the international community, therefore, to respect the will of the Somali people, and to refuse to continue to cooperate with those destructive elements that made Somalia synonymous with chaos and violence.

Somalia as a nation, as an entity, seemed condemned to a slow death, unable to expect either regional or international intervention or a positive change in the behaviour of the warlords. Saving Somalia, therefore, necessitated moving away from the usual practice, which revolved around a few, familiar, self-anointed representatives of the people. Rather than provide them with yet another opportunity to play their game of deception, I suggested that it was time to move beyond them; time to empower the Somali people; time the Somali people assumed responsibility for their own destiny. There needed to be a conference of all the actors, the ultimate objective of which would be the re-establishment of peace, government, legitimacy and reconstruction. I believe that a true reconciliation of all segments of Somali society would tap into the popular mood of the Somali people, who overwhelmingly rejected the status quo. There was at last a burning desire for change; a change that would transform the lives of the people and would restore respect, dignity and integrity; one that meant peace, security and development. For the first time, there was an alternative in sight: not the power of the gun, but the power of the people.

The peace process was designed to embrace the whole country, including regions that enjoyed relative peace and stability. It was to be comprehensive, inclusive and transparent, excluding no individual, group, sector or region.

But beyond comprehensive reconciliation, the goal was to create a national framework leading to an administration that represented the people fairly, protected their basic rights and values and guaranteed liberty and justice for all. Somalia, after all, was a nation that had gone without a government during the longest period of State collapse in the modern era. It

was a country where the law of the gun, lust for power and vengeance dominated the landscape, until fear and ruthlessness had decimated every opportunity for peace. The predictable outcome was a social and institutional collapse without parallel in this century.

The key aspect of the Djibouti-led IGAD peace process was its bottom-up approach, which emphasized community participation in discussions, slowly consolidating the gains achieved. This process not only was cumbersome, slow, painful, frustrating and visibly fragile at times, but also endured international scepticism and indifference. All along, we insisted on the openness, independence and integrity of the process to enable the majority of unarmed Somalis, including elders, traditional and religious leaders, scholars, women, politicians, the youth and the civil society at large, to own the process. Accordingly, our efforts were directed towards safeguarding the conceptual framework and rejecting all conditional offers of assistance, material or otherwise, while always remaining open or receptive to ideas or proposals that deepened and enriched the process.

The conference itself represented the culmination of a series of consultations, meetings, symposiums and contacts that took place over the first six months of the year. Its objective was to overcome and resolve some of the most divisive and emotional national issues. The elaborate, extensive and admittedly costly preparations were necessary to heal the painful past and formulate sensible humanitarian and political guarantees and safeguards. Never again should there be toleration of the kind of hateful human rights violations and gross abuses of power that had destroyed the country.

While the process took time and went through several phases, it enabled delegates to address all aspects of Somalia's collapse, spurred by the strong desire for peace prevailing in the country.

The cornerstone of the process was the key role played by the traditional leaders, particularly in the achievement of the broadest possible reconciliation among the Somali clans. For long stretches of time, amounting to years, there had been virtually no contact between them, allowing each to pile up grievances throughout the conflict. Slowly and painfully, the conference persistently addressed complex political issues, while striving to overcome deep animosities and implacable attitudes.

The very critical first phase of the conference began on 2 May and concluded in early June. It was the most important phase, for we must bear in mind that more than 200 elders and traditional leaders from every part of the country were coming together for the first time — not the first time in 10 years, but the first time in the entire existence of Somalia as a State — seeking to overcome a decade of frustration, fear, anger, suspicion and mistrust, without ever having had contact with each other before. Slowly, this legacy of the past was overcome and replaced with a common purpose: the search for a new destiny and a sense of the need to act at all costs. Through the wisdom, persistence and sincerity of these elders, it was possible to complete the reconciliation and to establish solid structures for the second phase. The core political choices could then be made.

The second phase began on 15 June, with the participation of over 2,000 delegates. The setting of this conference bore no resemblance to any in the past, because this one took place in a giant tent. There were no class or social distinctions evident among the participants, who included women, representatives of all minorities, a number of warlords and, of course, the entire clan mosaic of Somalia. Proceedings were covered by satellite and on the Internet in order to enable Somalis everywhere in the world to keep abreast of developments. Participants outnumbered the residents in Arta, the hill-top resort town, which was the venue for the conference. Nearly every resident contributed to the conference one way or another, particularly in accommodating this huge and sudden influx of visitors.

This phase of the conference made it possible to address many issues, from civil strife, human rights, healing and reconciliation, the economy, the political structure, disarmament, transitional mechanisms such as the interim constitution, the legislation, the government and the judiciary system. Slowly, an irreversible momentum, a feeling of rebirth, took shape. In a real sense, it was Somalia's second independence, this time not from colonialism but from chaos and utter hopelessness.

After one month of intensive drafting and debate, an interim constitution, or charter, was adopted. It established the number of representatives, including a quota for women, in the new assembly and the modalities for their election. This major step in the process signalled the beginning of a truly nationwide

reconciliation effort, as it contained a series of accommodations, including a clan-based system as the political mechanism for power sharing during the three-year interim authority. The resulting transitional national authority could therefore be a highly workable vehicle for both the parties who are for the process and the troublemakers. No one, though, should take either the reconciliation process or the new institutions as shielding any individual from past misdeeds or war crimes. This is among the challenges that will confront future constitutional Governments of Somalia.

Let me say that 26 August 2000 is a date which will forever stir the hearts and spirits of Somalis. It was on this date that Somalia's interim parliament elected the country's first president in more than a decade. Starting with a field of 25 candidates, voting was completed after several rounds and more than ten hours of bargaining and negotiating in order to secure cross-clan support within the Assembly to win the necessary majority. Interest among Somali viewers for the conference and the elections was certainly heightened by up-to-the-minute radio and satellite coverage, which permitted Somalis everywhere to follow the elections and the debates that had preceded them since the beginning of the process.

The man chosen from among the candidates is here with us today. This man in the news is Abdikassim Salad Hassan, the new President of Somalia, a seasoned, urbane, and a highly experienced politician, who has already demonstrated his rare skills through a series of visits and engagements, both inside Somalia and externally. I wholeheartedly congratulate him and welcome him and his delegation most warmly in this Assembly.

What a joy to see Somalia retake its rightful place among the community of nations! The realization of having a president at last fills Somalis everywhere with emotional exuberance. People are dancing and singing in the streets in what was described as a spontaneous national holiday. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to the member States of IGAD and to Yemen who were represented at the highest level to witness the swearing-in ceremony of the new president; we are equally grateful to Saudi Arabia, France, Egypt, Libya, Italy, Kuwait, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the United Nations for having sent high level delegations. And, of course, we wish to thank the entire diplomatic community in Djibouti for their presence and steadfast support.

Undoubtedly, we fully acknowledge the realism and genuine understanding so readily displayed throughout this process by the other immediate neighbours of Somalia, namely Kenya and Ethiopia. We have also received tremendous comfort from the continued encouragement and support from the Secretary-General and his able staff both in New York and in the region, particularly, from his Special Representative, Mr. David Stephen, and his staff, whose presence in the conference throughout the process proved remarkably beneficial. Equally, the unfailing commitment demonstrated by the Security Council throughout its series of statements since the launch of the initiative has been a source of constant comfort.

Obviously, the peace process invariably enjoyed full and unambiguous backing of IGAD, OAU, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union. We are deeply appreciative of their steady and principled stand. The Somali people will be forever grateful. Following the formation of the new Somali parliament, the Security Council reiterated that the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country was the precondition for overall normalization in Somalia and recommended that regional organizations work towards that end.

Some discordant voices have been raised questioning the acceptance of the new Government and its ability to return to Somalia. Some scoffed it would be a phantom government-in-exile, lacking legitimacy and resources. However, the triumphant return as well as the ecstatic welcome from the public of the new President-elect, Abdikassim, into Mogadishu, the centre of conflict, and the unprecedented show of support from all militiamen, including those allied to faction leaders, put the baseless stories to rest once and forever.

For those individuals who chose to oppose the creation of a representative and democratic Government, presumably because they are no longer at centre stage in Somalia, they need to come to terms with reality. A generous hand has been extended to all those people to join their peace-loving neighbours in supporting the talks, and now the Government. In fact, I personally invited and met with several of them in Djibouti for discussions in order to assure them there

was a place for everyone in the new Somalia under its proposed federal structure. Now, with a Government in place, the ball is in their court. We can only hope that they will make good use of the remaining opportunity for reconciliation and accommodation by placing the country first before their personal interests.

The rebirth of Somalia opens unlimited possibilities for Somalis throughout the world to rebuild their country. With the expected gradual return to normality in the country, the diaspora will have the incentive to invest in their homeland, bringing the capital and expertise needed to create employment opportunities for the youth.

It is to be hoped that the international community will mobilize emergency assistance for Somalia to enable the Government to lead the country, re-establish itself and re-create basic institutions and capacities. In the meantime, planning for medium- and long-term development must begin with the support of international financial institutions, the donor community, the United Nations and regional organizations.

Finally, let me state with all candour that for us in Djibouti this process has strained our meagre resources, but neither our resolve nor our faith. It has challenged our courage and perseverance, but our commitment has not wavered. Our people have made an exemplary effort and sacrifice.

May this endurance test of our people, and of the Somali people as well, serve as a source of inspiration and mark the beginning of what could be a major accomplishment for the Horn of Africa, and indeed for Africa and mankind as a whole.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Djibouti for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ismael Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Juan Francisco Reyes López, Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Mr. Juan Francisco Reyes López, Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Juan Francisco Reyes López, Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala, His Excellency Mr. Juan Francisco Reyes López, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. López (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Less than a week ago, in this same Hall, the President of the Republic of Guatemala, Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, addressed the Millennium Summit. On that occasion the President underscored our commitment to the purposes, principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations, and presented a summary of our view of the role of this universal Organization in the twenty-first century. In closing, he stated:

> "In the course of the general debate that will begin in the General Assembly next week, we will elaborate further on this vision and how it is reflected in the efforts we are making domestically." (*A/55/PV.3*)

Ms. Rodrigues (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I am honoured and pleased to deliver what our President promised.

I shall address two issues: first, our Government programme and the implementation of the peace agreements, and secondly, our position vis-à-vis some of the items on the agenda for this session. Before doing so, I wish to pay tribute to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his vigorous conduct of the last session, and particularly for his resolute work in the preparation for the Millennium Summit. We are pleased that Guatemala had an opportunity to cooperate in this undertaking.

I also wish to congratulate the President very warmly on his election to preside over our debates. I have no doubt that his recognized diplomatic and political experience will enable us to obtain the best results.

I begin with a few words on the peace process in my country, to which the United Nations has made such a significant contribution. December 1996 saw the signing, following a protracted period of arduous negotiations of Agreements that brought to an end four decades of a fratricidal war that had tragic and lasting consequences. Our political party was not a signatory. However, during the electoral campaign it affirmed, that it accepted the Agreements as a State commitment, and President Portillo confirmed that in the speech he made on taking office. Similarly, our Government is fully committed to complying with the provisions of the Agreements, and indeed to extend their scope to incorporate new matters, such as democratizing access to credit.

We value highly the presence in our country of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, and request the Assembly's cooperation for the extension, in due course, of its mandate until the end of 2003.

It is important to note that the purpose of the Peace Agreements coincides with our own Government programme in many areas, such as unrestricted respect for human rights; consolidation of a full, participatory democracy; subordination of the armed forces to the civil power; development of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual society; strengthening and modernization of the justice system; reform of the State; and, above all, an adequate response to the unsatisfied demands of the majority of Guatemalans for more and better social services, adequate incomes, better-paid jobs and equality of opportunity. In other words, the Peace Agreements constitute a suitable frame of reference for the programme of our Government, which aims not only to fulfil, but to improve on them.

Our economic and social programmes for the period 2000-2004 fit within this frame of reference, as does the political covenant, which seeks to increase the participation of all sections of civil society in the public policy decision-making process. These programmes also seek to reconcile the difficult economic situation that we face with our commitment to carry forward a vigorous process of economic expansion for the benefit of all Guatemalans — above all, the neediest. We are, in other words, grappling with the classic dilemma of having to meet the requirements of a macroeconomic adjustment while coping with the imperative need to reactivate the economy.

At the centre of the national debate about how to overcome this dilemma is a process of intersectoral accommodation that we call the "fiscal covenant", which aims to fulfil one of the commitments in the Peace Agreements, namely, raising the tax take in Guatemala by 50 per cent between 1995 and 2000.

The arduous and lengthy negotiations that have been conducted in this connection are about to come to fruition with the adoption of a set of measures which, once the commitment has been honoured — admittedly, a couple of years late — will provide financial support for implementing the other undertakings laid down in the Peace Agreements.

We intend to establish the necessary bases so that in the period 2001-2004 we may secure dynamic growth of the economy, with the resulting generation of decent, gainful productive employment together with higher levels of savings and investment.

We shall invest in the future by according priority to the work force, particularly in the areas of health and education, including multilingual education.

We shall carry out new productive activities in those areas where we feel that we have comparative advantages to offer at the international level.

We shall stimulate the institutional environment necessary to facilitate the efficient functioning of the market through competition without privileges and the competitiveness of enterprises, all within the framework of absolute respect for labour law.

We shall devote special attention to combating poverty, by decentralizing the public administration and working closely with those who are to be the target of our policies.

Now turning to our international relations, and bearing in mind those issues dealt with at the Millennium Summit, I wish to mention the significant advance achieved in the process as we seek to resolve our historic dispute with Belize. With full regard for the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes between or among States, we have reached a new stage whereby dialogue has been chosen as the means to settle differences. On 31 August, within the framework of the regional body to which both States belong, namely the Organization of American States (OAS), a body of facilitators, appointed by each party, has been set up. The facilitators enjoy full independence in the performance of their duties. Their chief aim is to work

out and propose courses of action to advance the legal resolution of the dispute. These are significant steps towards creating a peaceful environment, the adoption of confidence-building measures and a future-oriented or forward-looking outlook.

Similarly, we ratify, our deep commitment to supporting Central American integration, as well as our commitment to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our Government has taken important initiatives in the area of regional and subregional integration. Evidence of this is the tripartite declaration adopted last May by Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua in order to give fresh impetus to Central American integration.

The question of migrations is also an important branch of our international relations, one where Guatemala bases its policy on the principle that whatever the legal status of migrants may be, they are human beings fully entitled to rights under the law and, as such, capable of invoking the full range of human rights. Evidence of this is the fact that during his visit to the United Nations in connection with the Millennium Summit, the President of the Republic, signed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The best way to discourage migration is to create sources of employment in the countries of origin. The industrial countries, therefore, must dismantle all kinds of barriers so that developing countries are enabled to export commodities and not people.

I should now like briefly to explain our thinking on those main items that will be discussed in the Assembly at its fifty-fifth regular session.

First, I wish to restate our full backing for the United Nations, as expressed by President Portillo last week, since the Organization is the highest embodiment of multilateralism. We are persuaded that the Organization will have a crucial role to play in the twenty-first century. I attest to the tangible contribution that the United Nations has recently made in my country as regards both the consolidation of peace and in cooperation for development through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations agencies.

Secondly, we also wish to observe that it is necessary to adapt the Organization to the exigencies of globalization and to this post-cold war era. It is up to us, as member Governments, to promote this adaptation in various spheres such as intergovernmental bodies, efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat, the setting of priorities in the programme of activities and the financial strengthening of the Organization.

Of the pending reforms, the one which has received most attention is the Security Council. Can there be any doubt that its membership or its methods of work must reflect the prevailing circumstances of a contemporary world? There is no need to be frustrated at the lack of progress in prior sessions of the General Assembly in connection with the reform of the Security Council. We appreciate that there are differing viewpoints in this regard and, of course, differences tend to stalemate or paralyse action. But this should not prevent us from redoubling our efforts to make this absolutely vital organ of the United Nations more effective, more representative of the Members of the Organization as a whole and more transparent in the way it operates. To achieve those ends we advocate, among other things, expansion of the membership of the Council as well as an exercise of the veto in strict conformity with the Charter. We feel that, at any rate, regular use should be subject to review by the General Assembly and, in extreme instances, by the International Court of Justice in the interests of a genuine rule of law of an international character, thus avoiding abuses.

Thirdly, we are convinced that we need to strengthen our collective capacity to prevent and settle conflicts, both across borders and domestically. We believe that the recently submitted report by the Panel on United Nations peacekeeping operations offers an excellent point of departure for this purpose. Our only preliminary observation on the matter is that strengthening the United Nations capacity in this area should not be carried out at the expense of our economic and social activities. Rather, should we decide to implement the recommendations of the Group of Experts, then the time will have come to put an end to an ill-conceived policy of zero growth of the United Nations budget. As President Portillo stated:

> "If we want the United Nations to be a first class institution, we must learn to provide it with the necessary financial support." (*A/55/PV.3*)

This brings me to a fourth point that has gained considerable prominence in the agenda for this session.

I refer to the controversial question of revising the scale of assessments both for the regular budget and for the peacekeeping counterpart. Our position is very straightforward. We agree that the relative situation of many countries has developed over the years and this warrants a revision of the way in which we share the burden of financially maintaining the United Nations. At the same time, however, we feel that the most important criterion for fixing the scale of assessments is ability to pay. The relative participation of countries in the gross domestic product of the world continues to provide a basic yardstick. There is also justification for weighting this yardstick on the basis of certain special considerations, such as, for instance, recognition of the special situation of the least-developed countries on the one hand, and, on the other, of the special responsibility that should be assumed by the permanent members of the Security Council for maintaining peace.

In fifth place, as regards general disarmament, we emphasize the need to advance towards total elimination of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons; illicit trafficking in small arms; and the use of anti-personnel mines and explosive devices. In respect of these matters we strongly support all practical action being undertaken by the United Nations to achieve these aims as well as those designed to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world.

In the sixth place, we offer our full support for and active participation in the main events scheduled in the coming years. Among them, I wish to single out the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development and the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

In the seventh place, in an increasingly interdependent world, multilateral diplomacy has a crucial role to play in the struggle against environmental degradation. As Guatemala is a party to the main global environmental treaties, we reaffirm our commitment to the maintenance of ecological balance.

Finally, we feel the United Nations should continue to concern itself with what we have called the great unfinished task of the twentieth century: eradicating world poverty. Together with the multilateral financial institutions, our Organization should play a crucial role in ensuring that the benefits of globalization are widely shared by all countries. This calls for action at the level of each country, but also at the international level.

Similarly, by way of general comment, we wish to reiterate, before this Assembly, that Guatemala, in its very flesh, has experienced fratricidal confrontation. That is why Guatemala has the moral authority to insist, before God and man, that peace reign among all the peoples of the world, particularly between the separated brothers of China and Taiwan. We therefore appeal for the continuation of talks in order to achieve an outcome that will fulfil the aspirations of the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait, reached through peaceful, free and democratic means.

Likewise, we trust that a prompt solution to the Middle East conflict will be found and that situations of tension in the African continent and other parts of Europe will be overcome, as well as among any other fraternal people of the world who are victims of violence and discord.

I wish to conclude my statement by expressing a personal conviction. I am persuaded that all human beings are equal in the eyes of the Almighty, without distinction as to race, language or creed. I trust that in that same spirit we shall be able to beginning from this session to give effect to the guidelines enshrined in the Millennium Declaration adopted last week.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hubert Vedrine, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Vedrine (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking this year on behalf of the European Union, which France is presiding over until the end of December.

In this capacity, it is a great pleasure for me to congratulate the President on his election. It symbolizes the respect the international community has both for his country and for himself.

I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his skill in guiding the proceedings of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Nujoma and Ms. Tarja Halonen for their work with you, Mr. President, as Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan. His international action, his independence and his vision have made a decisive contribution to asserting the key role the United Nations plays and must continue to play. The European Union wishes to assure him of its support for his work and for the Organization and its representatives.

The Millennium Summit, an unprecedented gathering of 155 heads of State and Government, allowed us to address the main challenges facing the world community and the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, which will begin on 1 January 2001.

The Union notes with great satisfaction that the Summit produced a political document setting forth a road-map for the Organization for the years to come. These guidelines are based on ideas outlined in the Secretary-General's report. It is now up to the General Assembly to implement them. The Union will contribute actively to this.

Peacekeeping, strengthening international security and defending human rights are the central principles underpinning the European Union's foreign policy. Recent crises on Europe's very doorstep have convinced us that we cannot remain idle when these fundamental principles are violated. In this regard, the European Union approves of the priority given to peacekeeping during last week's meetings. Mr. Brahimi's report offers an in-depth analysis on this subject. It presents useful recommendations for the mandates of peacekeeping operations, operational planning in New York and deployment. It presents a unique opportunity to strengthen the United Nations capacity for peace operations. The European Union will actively participate in considering these recommendations.

The Union has decided to equip itself to be a major political actor and to play its full role on the international stage. To this end, and within a very short time-frame, it has undertaken decisive measures. New decision-making, action-oriented political and military bodies have been set up: a political and security committee, a military committee, a European Union military staff, a situation centre and a committee for civilian crisis management. These bodies will enable the European Union to intervene quickly and credibly in the management of international crises.

The European Union has also announced its intention to establish by 2003 a force of 60,000 troops for international missions involving the whole range of conflict-prevention and crisis-management operations, with the requisite air and naval support for deployment within 60 days for a period of at least one year. This autumn there will be a conference for the commitment of capability at which each Member State shall pledge its contribution to this joint endeavour.

The Union has also set ambitious and realistic targets for developing collective capabilities. In addition to its military resources, it will develop civilian intervention capabilities, including a corps of civilian police, whose contribution to peacekeeping is invaluable. In this connection, Member States have set themselves the goal of being able, by 2003, to provide up to 5,000 police officers, 1,000 of whom will be deployment-ready within 30 days.

These decisions now enable the European Union to complement its already sizeable economic and humanitarian programmes with the full range of resources required for crisis management. Of course, these activities are designed in full respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter. Now more than ever, it is vital to establish working ties with the United Nations. To initiate this cooperation, the European Union troika will discuss this issue for the first time with the Secretary-General. On behalf of the European Union, I hereby invite Mr. Kofi Annan to go to Brussels for a working meeting with the organs of the Union.

The European Union hails the considerable efforts and determination shown by the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Prime Minister during recent negotiations to reach a final agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. We welcome in particular the renewed vigour with which very sensitive issues have been addressed at this time.

We commend President Clinton and the Secretary of State for their unflagging efforts to facilitate negotiations. Circumstances favourable to reconciling positions continue to exist. We urge the parties to seize this historic opportunity, show courage in decisive choices, take fully into account human realities and the recognized rights of all, and thereby achieve a final agreement.

The European Union welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the zone it occupied in southern

Lebanon. It welcomes the redeployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the presence of a joint security force, sent to the area by the Lebanese Government. It urges all parties to fulfil their responsibilities in order to defuse tensions. The European Union believes that only a comprehensive settlement encompassing every track of the peace process, including the Israeli-Syrian track, is likely to guarantee lasting stability in the region. It will continue to support the efforts of the parties to this end and contribute to the implementation of any agreements that may be reached.

Turning to Europe, the situation in the western Balkans is a matter of serious concern to the entire international community. Ten years of conflict have ravaged the region, leading to severe human suffering and to politically unstable and therefore dangerous situations. But beyond accumulated hardships and the lagging economic and social development of many of those countries, all of the peoples and nearly all of the leaders of the region have realized that it does have a future, and that future is Europe. Today, all Europeans now share the belief that these countries are bound one day to join the European Union.

This is why the European Council has reiterated that its goal is to firmly attach the countries of the region to Europe. This means the greatest possible integration into the political, economic and social currents of Europe through the stabilization and association process, political dialogue, trade liberalization, the harmonization of their laws with those of the European Union, and cooperation in justice and domestic affairs.

The assistance provided by the European Union to countries of the region over the last 10 years — nearly 8 billion euros — is considerable. The European Union will continue to sustain this stabilization and association process by providing the western Balkan countries with massive technical, economic and financial assistance and by granting them asymmetrical trade advantages in farming and industry very soon, which will pave the way for the creation of a free trade zone with the European Union. In the context of elections concerning almost the entire region, we will encourage them to develop regional cooperation and to continue to make determined efforts for political, economic and social reform in order to consolidate democracy and human rights, to build the rule of law and lay the groundwork for sustainable development. In this context, the European Union has reaffirmed its determination to continue to be the driving force in the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe, which represents a new vision of cooperation between the countries of the region and the international community.

The summit to be held shortly in Croatia of the European Union and the Western Balkan countries — on the basis of a French proposal — will signal our common resolve to overcome the divisions of the past.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will not be able to participate in the conference, as the nature of its present regime does not allow it to do so. But the Serbs know that they have their place in the European family and that the European Union is looking forward to the day when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is in a position to participate fully in the stabilization and association process and to recover its rightful place in Europe. The elections to be held on 24 September could be decisive in this respect.

In Kosovo the international community, acting on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), has achieved praiseworthy results. Thanks must be given to all those who have made this possible in spite of enormous difficulties, especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations staff and the Kosovo Force soldiers, the many international organizations there on the ground and the non-governmental organizations. The first democratic municipal elections in Kosovo, to be held in a few weeks' time, will constitute a major step in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). I would forcefully reiterate that the international community will not allow unacceptable acts of violence, whatever their motivation, to cause the democratic electoral process under way to fail. We will not let extremists from whatever faction sabotage the work accomplished over the past year under the auspices of the United Nations.

The European Union considers the status quo in Cyprus unacceptable, and it supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to reach a negotiated, comprehensive, fair and lasting settlement consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions. It reiterates its commitment to stability and prosperity throughout the Mediterranean region. With talks beginning right here under the auspices of the Secretary-General, it

invites the parties concerned to enter into substantive talks.

The European Union is equally determined in its support for efforts to prevent and settle conflicts in Africa, in close cooperation with the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other subregional organizations and in accordance with the objectives agreed at the Africa-Europe Summit, held last April in Cairo under the Portuguese presidency of the European Union. It will lend its backing to the measures taken jointly by the OAU and the United Nations to implement the peace settlement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In supporting the deployment of international observers, the European Union is also willing to lend its support to the establishment and demarcation of borders, to demining and to assistance to refugees and displaced persons. It is endeavouring to provide assistance to the war-stricken populations of both countries, whose immense suffering has been compounded by drought.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It calls on all parties to the Lusaka Agreement to implement their commitments, including those made at Kampala. This will allow for progress with respect to the military and political provisions, all of which are under threat due to the continued fighting and the deadlock in preparing for a national dialogue. It also urges them to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1304 (2000), which calls for an orderly withdrawal of foreign forces from Congolese territory and for the cooperation of all parties in the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) through the lifting of restrictions on the freedom of movement of MONUC personnel and by ensuring their security.

The illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a violation of the country's sovereignty, is also unacceptable. The European Union therefore commends the establishment by the Secretary-General on 15 August last of a group of experts in charge of analysing ties between the illegal exploitation of those riches and the continuation of the conflict.

We are pleased to note greater awareness about the illicit trade in diamonds and other minerals, which directly fuels conflicts. This is the case in particular with the illicit trade in diamonds in Angola, whereby UNITA has been funding its war effort. We underscore the importance of complying with Security Council resolutions on this matter. We welcome the decision to place this important question on the General Assembly's agenda. The discussion should be based on the Kimberley process. It should reflect the work of the preparatory conference co-chaired by the United Kingdom and Russia. Lastly, it should examine the proposal made at Miyazaki to establish a standing group of independent experts to formulate ways of preventing illicit trade.

The European Union reiterates its support for resolution 1306 (2000) on Sierra Leone, which tightened existing arms sanctions and established an embargo on raw diamonds illegally exported from Sierra Leone. The European Union calls on all the parties to the conflict to comply with the principles and objectives of the Lomé Agreement and to be fully involved in the re-establishment of peace and stability and compliance with human rights in Sierra Leone.

The European Union and its member States will continue to contribute to African capacity and means of action in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular through support for the OAU and subregional organizations and initiatives.

The European Union is deeply concerned at the situation in Myanmar. It asks the Myanmar authorities to immediately restore Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi's freedom of speech, movement and communication with the outside. It is urgent for dialogue to begin between the Myanmar authorities and the democratic opposition, including the National League for Democracy and national minorities. The Union supports the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Burma, Mr. Razali, in his efforts to find a solution.

The European Union expresses its solidarity with the people of East Timor and commends the work done by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in close cooperation with the political authorities of East Timor. It is in favour of accelerating reconstruction assistance in order to guarantee a successful transition and avoid any delay in the timetable leading to independence.

We are extremely concerned by the instability caused by the militias in both East and West Timor. The new outbreaks of violence by them have taken the lives of two "blue beret" peacekeepers and, more

recently, of three personnel of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The European Union calls on the Indonesian authorities to adopt effective measures to control the militias without delay.

The European Union also calls for the termination of terrorist activity in Kashmir, the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures and strict respect for the line of control in order to restore a peaceful local climate and enable the dialogue between Pakistan and India to resume in the spirit of the Lahore Declaration. The European Union will be looking closely for such signs from the parties involved and will encourage initiatives likely to resolve all the disputes between the two countries.

It is important for the specific measures laid down in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) to be implemented and for Pakistan and India to subscribe to the international non-proliferation regime and sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Having advocated direct dialogue between the two Koreas for many years, the European Union welcomes the historic inter-Korean Summit that took place in Pyongyang from 13-15 June this year. This is an important step on the road to reconciliation between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, opening bright prospects for strengthening the stability of the region. We invite the two countries, who have been members of the United Nations since 1991, to continue this process in order to help the Korean people heal the wounds of the past.

On the subject of Haiti, the European Union recalls that full respect for the constitutional provisions concerning the elections and electoral legislation currently in force is the basis of democracy and the rule of law.

The threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is a crucial issue that the European Union — which shares the concern for international peace and security that ought to inspire the nations represented here — is resolved to combat relentlessly. To this end, international cooperation must be stressed, along with the development of multilateral standards for non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

This is particularly true of chemical and biological weapons, which have now been banned. The Union is working towards the early conclusion of a protocol containing reliable and effective verification measures to strengthen the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. We are equally determined to ensure nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, where so much progress has been made since the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which 187 States are now parties.

Since the end of the cold war, effective instruments for ending the arms race and achieving disarmament have begun to see the light of day, with the halt to testing, the treaty enshrining it, the first two START agreements to reduce the largest nuclear arsenals and a host of unilateral decisions following the same trend. Our priority must be to consolidate this mechanism. A start was made with the Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000; the results, which we welcome, must be fully implemented.

We must give full weight to strengthening the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through the widespread implementation of the measures contained in the 1997 Model Protocol and to remain alert to the issue of NPT compliance. We must also revive the momentum of the multilateral negotiations.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the completion of the operational readiness of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the negotiation at the Disarmament Conference of a fissile material cut-off treaty are all necessary steps that are of concern and ought to mobilize all States, be they parties to the NPT or not. The start of this negotiation implies urgent negotiations on a working programme in the Conference on Disarmament. International standards in this field can only be effective if they are universal. Arsenal reductions, which are the prime responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States, must also be continued. This will enable us to move closer to our common objectives — namely, the elimination of nuclear weapons and general, comprehensive disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The issue of small arms and light weapons is just as sensitive in many regions of the world. It deserves special attention. The 15 European Union members

will contribute to the preparation of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which will take place during the summer of 2001, with the objective of obtaining a positive and enforceable plan of action to combat the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, the Union shall continue its drive for the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. It will join in the efforts to achieve the total elimination of anti-personnel mines.

On the very important subject of human rights, the European Union will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations to reach the goal set by the Secretary-General to put human rights at the heart of every aspect of its work. The best guarantee of solid progress in this area is each person's awareness of the importance of human rights and democracy and the emergence of groups who actively promote them in every country. In this connection, the European Union welcomes the designation, thanks to the support of many countries, of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Jilani; we welcome her appointment and assure her of our full backing as she undertakes her duties.

This year the United Nations has once again demonstrated that it is the main forum of progress in setting standards for human rights, as witnessed by the adoption of two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sexual exploitation of children and on children in armed conflicts. This represents a major step forward in favour of the protection of children. The European Union intends to contribute actively to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly for the follow-up to the World Children's Summit, to be held next year, which will give the international community yet another opportunity to help this cause move forward.

Another important task, the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, lies ahead. At the European Preparatory Conference, to be held in October under the auspices of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the European Union will demonstrate its commitment to combat all expressions of racism, whatever form they take. The Union, all of whose members have abolished the death penalty, calls on States that have not yet done so to adopt a moratorium as a first step towards the eventual abolition of this punishment, which is contrary to human dignity.

The European Union will endeavour to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and will play an active role in the negotiations to be held to that end. It earnestly hopes that this General Assembly will adopt the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols at the Palermo Conference next December. Given that such crime, that one of its most odious manifestations is the trafficking in human beings, and that it poses an ever-growing threat to our societies, it is vital for the international community to develop the means to cooperate and fight against it effectively.

Lastly, the European Union looks forward to the early establishment of the International Criminal Court. I would like to recall that ratification by 42 States is still needed for this.

By way of conclusion, I would like to stress one last point, and that is sustainable development. The European Union's contribution to international cooperation is substantial. With 30 per cent of the global gross domestic product, the Union contributes 36 per cent of the United Nations regular budget and 39 per cent of the peacekeeping budget. As you know, it also contributes the rather large amount of around 55 per cent of the world total of official development assistance. We are pleased with everything that was said last week on this extremely important matter, and we will continue our exemplary work on sustainable development. Indeed, we believe that development is one of the key ways of resolving all of the problems facing us throughout the world, as outlined in my statement, and the European Union wishes to express its strong, continuing commitment to that end.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency the Honourable Chakra Prasad Bastola, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Mr. Bastola (Nepal): I join previous speakers in congratulating the President on his well-deserved election to preside over this Millennium Assembly. I am confident that, with his wisdom and consummate diplomatic skill, he will steer the Assembly to a successful conclusion.

Let me also express our appreciation to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia, for his

exemplary leadership as president of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, especially in the run-up to the Summit. Secretary-General Kofi Annan also deserves our unqualified tribute for his innovative leadership to prepare the United Nations for greater challenges ahead.

Nepal wholeheartedly welcomes Tuvalu as the newest member of the United Nations family. We congratulate the people and Government of that Pacific island country on this happy occasion of joining the world body as an independent nation.

Last week the heads of State and Government assembled in this Hall of the people to ponder measures to address the challenges of the twenty-first century, and reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations as the central instrument for promoting peace, prosperity and justice. The vision given us by the Summit's Millennium Declaration will be a guide for the global community, and particularly for the United Nations, in the days ahead. Nepal welcomes the Declaration and pledges its commitment to implement it with the utmost seriousness.

My Prime Minister, addressing the Summit, expressed the view that the future will judge us by the ability of our leadership to make a difference in people's lives. We in Nepal expect the global community to work in cooperation and solidarity, in a true spirit of partnership, to change for the better the destiny of every man, woman and child around the world.

As we enter a new century and a new millennium, the world is replete with paradoxes. It now has fewer inter-State wars, but numerous civil wars. Science and technology have made unprecedented advances, but diseases like AIDS still defy treatment. More people enjoy democracy and freedom, but terrorism still draws youth. The walls of frontiers are crumbling in the globalized economy, but the assertion of cultural identity has increased. The United Nations has to work in the midst of these paradoxes.

The United Nations has succeeded remarkably in bringing peace in some situations and failed in others. Its involvement has eased tensions in the Central African Republic and Tajikistan. East Timor is heading into independence in relative calm. Kosovo is engaged in building democratic institutions. Israel has withdrawn its forces from southern Lebanon, a withdrawal which has vastly improved the prospects of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Still durable peace remains as elusive as ever. In essence, it entails a culture of peace founded on disarmament and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, as well as on measures that remove the root causes of conflict — poverty and exclusion.

Lasting peace cannot be secured until nuclear weapons, which constitute the major threat to global security, are eliminated in a time-bound manner. Nor can it be achieved without the complete eradication of other weapons of mass destruction. We consider that weapons delivery systems and the so-called national missile defence systems threaten the peace as well.

Small arms and light weapons have killed more people than all weapons of mass destruction combined. We must turn our backs on the guns by controlling small arms and light weapons. In this context, we welcome the proposed conference on small arms to be held in 2001.

Conflicts disturb Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The Middle East is yet to conclude the final settlement and be at peace with itself. The Balkans are still rife with dispute, though of a lesser extent now. South Asia is in the perennial pain of low intensity war. Terrorists are on the prowl in many places, exploiting the fragility of States. As a result, thousands of innocent lives have been lost. The action of the Security Council, which is the world's sentry, has been too little, too late in many situations; it has let emerging disputes descend into full-blown conflicts. Nepal urges the Security Council to act in a timely manner, promptly, decisively and adequately to prevent conflagrations.

Nepal has always been an active participant in United Nations peace operations. Nepalese peacekeepers have served with impeccable professionalism and dedication and have earned a name for themselves. Many valiant Nepalese Blue Helmets have laid down their lives in the service of world peace. The recent death of Private Devi Ram Jaishi, a Nepalese peacekeeper, while defending peace in East Timor, rekindles our commitment to abiding peace, wherein no one needs to lose a father, husband or son to violence.

As host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal

is strongly committed to enhancing the Centre's contribution to peace and disarmament, and is fully prepared to meet its obligation to house the Centre in Kathmandu.

The report (A/55/305) of the panel on the United Nations peace operations provides a wealth of ideas to put peacekeeping on a sound footing and to improve peace and security in the world. My delegation agrees with the tenor of the report, and will be willing to examine it in greater detail as it comes up for closer scrutiny.

A survey of the present trouble spots on earth would lead us to one unmistakable conclusion: most conflicts have poverty and exclusion at their root. All too often, we tend to treat the symptoms, not the cause. Nepal strongly believes that a durable peace will continue to elude us as long as we do not eliminate dehumanizing poverty and deprivation. Prime Minister Koirala aptly described at the Summit the vicious circle of poverty and conflict, and asked the world community to redouble its efforts to reduce poverty in search of peace. That deserves serious consideration.

Today more than one fifth of humanity lives on less than a dollar a day. Poverty, illiteracy and diseases are rife in the poor countries. Unemployment among youth is rampant. A growing population finds itself scrambling over shrinking resources in a stagnant economy, which has been the case in most developing countries. The AIDS pandemic has become a major scourge of the developing world, particularly in Africa. Unscrupulous leaders, often for narrow political gains, fish in the troubled waters and incite violence, which shatters the fragile economy further, making the next cycle of violence inevitable and even more deadly.

If we are ever to achieve lasting peace, we must reduce poverty and build peace from there. We subscribe to the targets, suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (A/54/2000), and adopted by the Summit, to reduce poverty and promote development in the developing countries. World conferences, one after another, have concluded that this is the only way forward. A series of their mid-term reviews has reaffirmed this conclusion; yet, sadly, nothing much has changed.

In global forums, both North and South have agreed to work together for accelerated growth and development in the South, to open the markets in the rich countries to the products of the poor countries and to improve access of the developing countries to technology in the advanced countries; to relieve the poor countries of their debt obligations; and to promote social development and human rights. The global commitments are forgotten before the ink on them dries. We must narrow the gap between what we say and what we do.

Most advanced countries have, for instance, sorely lagged in meeting their pledges of development assistance. More aid now means no need for it later. Nepal commends those rich countries that have met the aid targets, and urges others to do so. It is disturbing that the United Nations funds and programmes, which are the main sources of unconditional assistance, have been facing a decline in their resource base; we call on the global community to replenish their fungible resources.

Although global trade has increased several times in the last few years, the developing countries — especially, the least developed ones — are losing ground as their share in world trade diminishes, due mainly to the declining terms of trade for them. Globalization has gained momentum as people, trade and services move across borders at an exceptional speed. And information technology has opened a whole new vista of communication, including e-commerce. Much as both of these phenomena have potential benefits for all, they have benefited some more than others, widening the disparity between the rich and the poor. We believe that the wealthy countries, together with the World Trade Organization, must work towards more equitable and rule-based trade to narrow the income gaps, promote equitable globalization and bridge the digital divide.

Countries in the South are sinking under the unbearable burden of foreign debt. While we appreciate the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative of the rich countries, we also urge them to expedite its implementation and expand its scope to cover all the least developed countries and other countries in serious difficulties, not of their own making.

Foreign direct investment has become a motor of growth for a few, but the vast majority of developing countries remain untouched by this new phenomenon. Understandably, markets drive investors in their investment decisions, yet Nepal believes that our development partners can encourage investors, through

a vigorous guarantee and incentive scheme, to invest in those countries that have yet to see much foreign direct investment.

The unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in the rich countries, together with the population pressure in the poor countries, have taken a high toll of the environment, the common human heritage. The global agreements to promote sustainable development and to reduce greenhouse gases remain largely unfulfilled. As for Nepal, we have taken measures to preserve the environment through establishing norms, reducing pollutants, extending the forest coverage and building the green component into development projects. We are also studying the Kyoto Protocol with a view to becoming a party to it.

The least developed countries, particularly the land-locked ones like Nepal, are confronted with the most formidable challenges of development. Over the years poverty in these countries has increased and their share of world trade has sharply declined. In Nepal, for instance, more than 50 per cent of the people are illiterate and live below the poverty line. Lack of access to the sea not only makes transportation difficult for us, but also deprives us of sea-based resources. These disadvantaged countries therefore need special measures to overcome their development constraints, including better transportation facilities for the land-locked countries so that they can reduce poverty and join the global economic mainstream. We believe that the conference on the least developed countries to be held in Brussels next year will open up a new vista of cooperation for their development.

Nepal hopes that the high-level event on financing for development next year will find reliable means for funding development in the developing world. It must energize both North-South and South-South cooperation to fulfil shared objectives.

As a functioning democracy, Nepal is committed to human rights and good governance. We have a Government that is accountable to people and pledged to serve them best. As democracy, development and human rights reinforce each other, we strive to promote them together so that people have the opportunity to realize their full potential. Nepal is a party to most human rights instruments, and we hold the view that civil and political rights are as important as economic, [illegible]. Therefore we oppose any selective use of human rights values to suit vested political interests.

I also wish to report to the Assembly that Nepal has recently freed the remaining few thousand bonded labourers and established the National Human Rights Commission. During the Summit we also signed the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, protocols on the sale of children and on children in armed conflicts.

Today more than 22 million people have taken refuge outside the country of their origin, and millions are displaced within — sometimes because of natural calamities, but very often because of their Governments or because of terrorists. Nepal itself has nearly 100,000 refugees from Bhutan, their presence has created economic, social and environmental problems for us. Nepal believes that both State and non-State actors must respect the human rights of the weak and vulnerable, including those of women and children.

The security of small States has remained a perennial concern for us. During the cold war the fear was of being trampled in the super-Power rivalry; in the post-cold-war era the fear is that small States will be economically, militarily or politically bullied if they act in a manner that incurs the wrath of the stronger States. It is saddening that even the United Nations is forced frequently to acquiesce to the designs of the powerful. We urge the international community to uphold the rule of law and the rich and powerful countries to respect the right of small States to sovereign independence, something they zealously guard themselves.

Whenever there are problems anywhere on the length and breadth of the planet, the United Nations is called on to inspire and act, without necessarily being giving the requisite resources. Since there is no alternative to the United Nations, we must revitalize and reinforce it through comprehensive reforms so that it can rise to the challenges of changing times. It is imperative to restore the primacy of the General Assembly, which is the closest thing to a world parliament, so as to bring the will of the peoples to bear on vital global policies.

The Security Council reform process has dragged on for quite a while. Although there is no quick fix, nor

composition, more transparent in function and more capable of keeping peace. The Security Council, by doing too little too late, has often proved part of the problem, rather than of the solution. We must change it.

Now that the recent Summit has recognized poverty and social exclusion as the principal cause of conflict, it is critical that we focus our attention on reinforcing the Economic and Social Council on a par with the Security Council on economic matters. We must work towards making the Economic and Social Council capable of coordinating the funds and programmes within the United Nations and with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other outside bodies.

Nepal applauds the Secretary-General for the silent and continuous revolution at the United Nations in search of economy and excellence. Indeed, there is a constant need to regenerate and reinvent the world body to attune it to the emerging challenges in a changing world.

Sadly, the United Nations has to limp from one year to the next as some of the key contributors fail to live up to their treaty obligations. We believe that the cardinal principle for apportioning financial obligation should be the capacity to pay, based on one's share of world gross national product, with special responsibility on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council in peacekeeping budgets. It is morally indefensible to make the poorer countries subsidize the richer countries to keep the United Nations and its peacekeeping activities going. We call on all Member States to pay their dues in full, on time and without conditions.

South Asia has one fifth of the world's people, but lacks recognition and clout commensurate with its size and potential. The only way for it to gain the place it deserves is through regional cooperation. Yet we in the region have not been able to work closely and cohesively for the greater good of our peoples. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is virtually at a standstill. Nepal urges all fellow South Asian countries to work collectively for the shared prosperity of our peoples. Time will not be kind to us if we fail to seize the opportunity.

The Acting President: I now call on His

Mr. Borg (Malta): I would like to join the other delegations here in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly. May I also pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who, through his experience and diplomatic skills, guided the fifty-fourth session to a successful conclusion. I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, under whose guidance and with whose expertise the Organization has been moving ahead in the attainment of its goals. May I also extend a warm welcome to Tuvalu, the newest Member of the United Nations. For many years Malta and Tuvalu have cooperated as joint members of the Commonwealth.

This is an auspicious occasion, not merely because the General Assembly is the most widely representative group of the world's peoples, but also since it comes at a time when we are poised on the edge of a new dawn, a new beginning. Only last week we saw and heard the heads of State or Government of countries the world over reaffirm their faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. It was a renewed commitment to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's people. This is a weighty undertaking, and one which may well benefit from a re-examination of the experience acquired during the past 55 years of the United Nations existence.

As we are all no doubt aware, the United Nations has been instrumental in fostering a culture of partnership among States. Indeed, we meet here today in the understanding that this culture of partnership must continue to constitute the basis for humanity's progress. This is more than just a vision for the future; it is the road map for the way forward based on a programme of action that has weathered the vicissitudes of time and withstood test after test ever since its adoption in San Francisco over half a century ago. It is a noble endeavour that has survived in the face of adversity, that has experienced occasional setbacks, but that has also registered more than a fair share of success.

Aided by its long-standing commitment to dialogue, the United Nations has positively contributed to the process of decolonization that has so decisively transformed the political map of the world. It has

ranging from health care to food supplies, from literacy to urban development, from historical heritage to the natural environment, and, more recently, improving the status of women.

Nevertheless, in the crucial area of the maintenance of peace and security — the very *raison d'être* for the creation of the United Nations — the Organization, for various reasons, has at times been unable to fulfil this mandate. This is reflected in the painfully honest reports of the Organization's failings in Rwanda and Srebrenica. These negative experiences provided the backdrop to the recently published Brahimi report.

The Government of Malta shares the concerns expressed in this report, which cautions in particular against entrusting the United Nations Secretariat with unrealistic mandates while not providing it with commensurate resources. We look forward to early consultations on the manner in which the recommendations of the report may be pursued.

We have given serious consideration to addressing these concerns and have decided to match them with a specific commitment. It was in this connection that my Prime Minister last week, in his address to the Millennium Summit, signalled Malta's intention to significantly increase its peacekeeping contribution through a voluntary move from group C to group B.

It will be recalled that over the years Malta has made other contributions towards promoting the global objectives of the United Nations. These have included a number of initiatives not designed in the narrow national interest but in the interest of the international community as a whole.

May I recall in this connection Malta's proposals to the General Assembly relating to the seabed and the ocean floor, which led to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to the question of the ageing and to the initiative relating to climate change. These initiatives alerted the United Nations to examine the far-reaching, serious implications of those issues and thereby enabled it to adopt timely measures, which, as can be appreciated, have helped defuse, and continue to defuse, potential political tensions, environmental dangers and social complications.

The progress recorded in the United Nations over the years is impressive and a source of great satisfaction to my Government. The goals achieved, while relevant the world over, lie extremely close to the heart of the area of which Malta forms part. The Mediterranean can be seen as a microcosm of the larger world stage. We have faced, and continue to face, intermittent conflicts and wide gaps in development levels. The shortage of freshwater resources in some areas is potentially another serious challenge. Despite being a sea of promise and great opportunity, the Mediterranean continues to challenge our political will to nurture long-lasting stability. Security in the Mediterranean requires committed and quiet determination to identify both the problems and, more importantly, the solutions. The element of dialogue that has so often underscored the work of the United Nations has brought much to the enhancement of relations between the States of that part of the world. Malta indeed not only shares the aspirations of the United Nations in this regard, but has striven throughout the years to ensure that they become an integral part of all dealings in the Mediterranean.

Together with the rest of the world community, Malta welcomes the progress made in the Middle East peace process. We hope that the same determination as helped overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the past will continue to inspire the protagonists to work for the goal of a just and permanent peace and security for our Middle Eastern neighbours.

The Balkans are another part of the Mediterranean area that also continues to challenge the will of the international community in its quest for stability and its determination to ensure that full respect for human rights becomes the common heritage of all peoples who live there. In this respect, every positive development is of the utmost importance.

For over 25 years the situation in Cyprus has remained a cause of concern. We therefore earnestly hope that an early settlement of the Cyprus question will be found. In this connection, the Maltese Government reiterates its full support for the Secretary-General's efforts to find a solution on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Mediterranean has also been witness to the cruel and merciless trafficking in human beings, a tragic and criminal exploitation of the misery of others. We welcome the initiatives taken by the Italian Government at the Conference for Development and Security in the Adriatic and the Ionian held in Ancona

last May. The broad parameters established in that Conference can indeed serve as a prototype for similar agreements elsewhere.

Malta has always been acutely aware of the role it can play in bridging the divides of this complex area. Successive Maltese Governments have consistently promoted efforts to develop and consolidate cooperation between the littoral States of the Mediterranean at both a bilateral and multilateral level.

In the mid-1970s we hosted the preparatory meeting that led to the Barcelona Convention that launched the Mediterranean Action Plan. In 1995 we argued in favour of a Mediterranean stability pact for the region, a proposal which is now taking shape in the form of a Euro-Mediterranean charter for peace and stability. In 1997, at a time of difficult political circumstances for the area, Malta hosted the second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, following that of Barcelona in 1995. More recently, Malta was one of the prime movers behind a recommendation within the Conference on Security Co-operation in the Mediterranean process of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly of Mediterranean States. These initiatives serve to underscore our commitment to the achievement of peace, prosperity and a just solution to the demands of the Mediterranean people.

We believe, however, that on our own we can only do so much, and that therefore the principle of multilateralism, as enshrined in last week's Declaration, must be fully respected and observed. As was stated in the final Declaration of the Millennium Summit, the management of economic and social development, as well as the risks and threats to international peace and security, must be a shared responsibility. Freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and respect for the natural environment are goals towards which our combined energies and efforts should be channelled.

It is for these reasons that we have chosen to pursue the path of membership of the European Union. It is the common values and principles that inspired the birth of what is today the European Union that inspire us in our quest. This is because it is through membership that we feel we can best play our part on the international stage, and contribute more effectively towards the promotion of peace and progress in the Mediterranean. We feel that our capabilities to play a useful role may be greatly enhanced from within the European Union. This is not solely for our own local benefit. We believe that our membership will give the European Union an added dimension that will serve to benefit both the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean littoral.

Good governance is what we, the peoples of the United Nations, seek at a national, regional and international level. Yet good governance is exactly what is threatened by a number of phenomena that plague our contemporary society. Ranging from the trafficking of drugs to that of armaments and human beings, international organized crime threatens the very texture of law and order through abuse, corruption and violence. The growth of related crimes also alerts us to the need for ever closer international cooperation.

As much as the socio-political environment requires constant vigilance, so too does the physical environment. Global warming remains a constant concern, and we urge that the undertakings to ward off the further degradation of the ozone layer be fully adhered to.

Questions of disarmament, extreme poverty, the striking proportions of HIV and AIDS and the vulnerability of the disabled, infirm and those discriminated against on the basis of race or religion remain ever present on the world agenda. At no time must we lose sight of these very real issues faced by a huge proportion of the world's people. We must, in pursuit of a more caring and equitable society, seek to understand and subsequently meet the needs of these vulnerable members of society. It is not sufficient to promote global e-commerce and ever new economic world orders if we do not also tackle the root causes of many of the problems in the developing world. We need to convert these enormous challenges into moments of opportunity. We need to harness the positive forces of globalization, the new knowledge-based economy and the opportunities of trade to bridge the divides that persist throughout each and every continent.

The United Nations has taken a leading role in promoting international understanding and agreement in relation to these varied and diverse areas. Indeed, a wide spectrum of activities, international agreements and agencies of the United Nations have been put to good use in the creation of the impetus necessary for change. We must continue in our endeavours to bring

people to a common understanding of how this can best be consolidated, not solely through dialogue, but through concrete actions that must necessarily follow.

The number and variety of tasks that face the United Nations are by no means small. Malta is, however, convinced that the United Nations is the forum best positioned to provide workable options and long-term solutions to the problems that plague the world and man's relations with it. Last week's Millennium Summit clearly demonstrated the international community's renewed commitment to this unique and indispensable Organization and its vital role in the maintenance of peace and stability, the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease and the protection of the global environment.

If the Millennium Summit charted our course towards making the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples, then the Millennium Assembly must come to be remembered as the point in time when the first major decisions were taken to place the Organization firmly on this chosen path. I hope that these will not be merely empty declarations of intent, but that each Government and each of us here present today will endeavour to better our corner of the globe as best we can. My Government remains determined to play its part.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.